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THE KNOUT.—*Page* 179.

# THE KNOUT & THE RUSSIANS.





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# THE KNOUT

AND

# THE RUSSIANS;

OR THE

## MUSCOVITE EMPIRE, THE CZAR, AND HIS PEOPLE.

By GERMAIN DE LAGNY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY JOHN BRIDGEMAN.




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# THE KNOUT

AND

# THE RUSSIANS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### I.

Russia, which has always engrossed, in a high degree, the attention of Europe, is now playing a part which has spread uneasiness on all sides, and is exciting a feeling of curiosity, which we believe it is in our power to satisfy.

There exists, with regard to this country, a profound state of ignorance, kept up by books written in a spirit of complaisance, and in which fiction has almost invariably usurped the place of truth.

The national historians do not possess the power of writing according to the dictates of their consciences; it is the gold of the government that determines the conclusions at which they arrive.

As to foreign travellers, they are watched with such strictness that, in respect of the impressions produced on them during their travels, they can hardly be sup-

posed to bring back with them any more than just so much as the Russian police is kindly pleased to allow. Indeed, it is quite sufficient for us to know with what suspicious care the said police stops the traveller and questions him at the frontier. Permission to enter the country is only granted him, after he has undergone a searching examination as to his conduct, his opinions, and, above all, the object of his visit. He is required to explain his connections and social position. Does he belong to any association? Is he a freemason? What has he come to the country for? Are his resources sufficient to maintain him, during the period that his business or his pleasure will keep him there? [1]

Should he let fall the slightest intimation that he is desirous of making observations upon or devoting himself to the study of the manners or state of society of the country, he is inexorably turned back.

This explains why people know so little concerning this colossus.

In Germany, more than in any other country, the Russian name is abhorred. It is looked upon as the most complete expression of all that is barbarous and savage; and, for the greater proportion of the other nations of Europe, the Russian is still the wandering Tartar of Gengis-Khan and Tamerlane. There is some truth in this opinion, but, at the same time, it must be allowed that though Russia is a nation that stands alone in history, by the singularity of its customs and the

[1] See Appendix, A.

monstrosity of some of its political institutions, it is no longer what it was at the time when its Czars, drunk with wine and blood, used to let loose, in the streets and public squares of Moscow and Novgorod, bears, wolves, and famished dogs, to devour the mutilated and bleeding corpses of the victims whom they had themselves transfixed, or caused others to tranfix, with their lances, and had then thrown out upon the ignoble causeway. It is no longer what it was in the days when its Czar, Peter the Great, used to mete out justice, sabre in hand, cutting off the heads of eleven of the revolted Strelitz, and presiding, for ten whole days, at the most atrocious executions. At present their barbarity is the same as it used to be, only that it assumes more hypocritical, and, if I dare use the term, more civilised forms.

If Europe is still, at this moment, under the dominion of a great many prejudices and errors, unfavourable to Russia, who is to be blamed for it? The Russians themselves. Habits of dissimulation and flattery, are carried to such an extent by them, that every one, without exception, renders himself the accomplice of the Czar and of the government, in deceiving and leading into error, by the grossest falsehoods, those travellers who, by their spirit of impartiality and investigation, would have been most capable of thoroughly examining certain questions and placing the country in its true light.

## II.

It is by viewing Russia from a political point of view, and reading the history of the country, that we perceive how easy it is to crush this people's pride.

The real aggrandisement of Russia dates from the time of Peter I. Well, we will here take the liberty of rapidly showing that the conquests of this empire, since the period in question, prove its personal impotence, by revealing a moral or actual complicity on the part of Europe to facilitate them, and to open all the routes, through which Russia unaided would never have been able to penetrate. We are not going upon any mere hypothesis; we transcribe facts which people do not appear sufficiently to bear in mind.

Everywhere, indeed, do we find Russia conniving with some other state, which aids and favours its projects for the satisfaction of its ambitious designs.

If Germany fears, at the present day, the force and power of Russia, it was she herself who laboured hardest to promote the rapid growth of this giant of the north.

Let us set out from the dismemberment of Poland, as our point of departure.

Was this conquest, so glorious for Russia, the result of its own political plans or of any victory over its enemies? No! Poland was dismantled by the efforts

of three great powers, united to commit the most brutal and atrocious act of spoliation, and, strange to say, in the midst of a complete European peace.

To whom was the first idea of this due? To the Austrian cabinet, and particularly to the Prince of Kaunitz.

Austria was fearful of seeing Russia, profiting by the rapid decay of Turkey, seize the Crimea and the Wallachian provinces, and menace to engross exclusively the navigation of the Lower Danube. To declare war was a difficult task for Austria, who had, at that period, to repair losses which were too great to allow of her raising fresh armies. She could not have looked for any aid from Prussia, bound by the treaty of 1764 to the Czarina Catherine, and, consequently, obliged to furnish Russia with aid and assistance in case of an attack. Besides this, Frederick had put Prussia on such a footing that, as a military power, she already frightened her neighbours.

The cabinet of Vienna was in this state of perplexity, when the splendid project of the dismemberment of Poland sprang from the brain of the Prince of Kaunitz.

The frightful anarchy into which Poland had fallen since the accession of a favourite of Catherine II. to the throne of the Jagellons served as a pretext. Joseph II. broached the matter to Frederick, who joyfully approved of the proposition. The Russian cabinet was sounded, and, on the solicitation of the King of Prussia, the Czarina consented to re-assure Austria by

renouncing (momentarily) the occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia.

A first treaty, of the 17th of January, 1772, regulated the pretensions of each of the parties concerned, and, on the 5th of August following, another treaty pronounced the dismemberment of Poland.

In 1794 and 1795, precisely at the epoch when the French Convention was proclaiming those democratic principles *which astonished nations and terrified kings,* in spite of the efforts of the great Kosciusko and the day of Dubienka—which afforded the Russians one more proof that it is difficult for them to vanquish a civilised people—the last remains of Poland, which, under a false pretence of modesty, the three powers had, until then, respected, were definitively shared between them, in order to smother, said the coalition, *the Jacobinical ideas that had come from France*, and which infested Warsaw and threatened their dominions.

On the part of Prussia, this was not only a piece of perfidy, but an enormous fault and impolitic act as well, for she was overthrowing the barriers which guaranteed her from the ambition of Russia, who became her neighbour, to meddle afterwards in the affairs of Germany, and constitute herself the champion of Absolutism there.

Let us cast a glance in another direction.

After the death of Soliman, the power of the Porte sinks rapidly towards complete ruin. In the provinces the pashas revolt and proclaim themselves independent. At Stamboul, the janissaries raise or over-

throw sultans, just as their caprice dictates; and Turkey, like Poland and like Persia—whose downfall is advancing likewise with rapid strides—reaches a state of social decomposition, worse, perhaps, than actual barbarism. It was under cover of this complete decay, that Russia succeeded, though not without great efforts, in seizing on the Greco-Turkish provinces which border on the Black Sea, and that the Czarina constituted herself the protectress of the Danubian Principalities.

With the death of Frederick, vanished the fear with which his great genius inspired his neighbours, and which alarmed Catherine as well, for she, better than any one else, well knew the weak points of her empire. Russia was the first to reveal her views on the East; they tended to nothing less than brutally to dispossess the Sultan of his dominions, from the shores of the Bosphorus to those of the Gulf of Venice; Panslavism already formed one of the ideas of the Russian government. The cabinet of St. Petersburg concluded a treaty with Austria, who, once again, had stupidly seconded it, and once again became the victim of her perfidious ally.

After this treaty was signed, Catherine quitted her capital, followed by an escort of forty thousand men, under pretence of visiting the remote parts of her vast empire, appeared suddenly on the shores of the Black Sea, and took possession of the Crimea before the Turks were even informed of her departure from St. Petersburg. When people employ such means as these, success is easily achieved.

Let us continue this retrospective history of the foreign means and succours, by the aid of which Russia always finds interested allies or impoliticly complaisant friends to satisfy her projects of ambition.

After the interview at Tilsit, Napoleon, finding it necessary to interest the Czar Alexander in the plans he was meditating with regard to Spain, gave him Finland as a sop. It was easy to foretell the result of this war. Russia being free on all sides, and, likewise, encouraged and morally sustained by Napoleon, fell with all her enormous weight upon Sweden, a poor and almost sterile country. It is quite possible, however, that the Muscovite empire would have succumbed in the contest, had it not been for the treachery of Admiral Cronstedt, treachery dearly bought with large sums of gold, and which compelled the cabinet of Stockholm to conclude a peace and give up Finland, at the same time that she delivered into the hands of the Russians the fortress of Sweaborg, which bore the reputation of being impregnable, and which was the key of the province as well as the depôt of the military resources of the country.

Lastly, to give the finishing touch to all these easy victories, is it necessary for us to remind our readers of the unheard-of and for a long time fruitless efforts of Russia to put down the Polish insurrection in 1831? Was it not Prussia, too, who with a total disregard of all conventions of neutrality, opened to Russia the port of Dantzig and the course of the

Vistula, to facilitate the passage of her armies and the transport of her warlike stores?

In every case, and on every occasion, has Russia invariably had recourse to the assistance of her neighbours. Unaided and alone she has never undertaken or accomplished anything.

But what kind of language was it, which the same Russian cabinet, that, in 1808, dictated such pitilessly cruel conditions to Sweden, when the question turned upon setting limits to Finland, held, the year before, when Napoleon drove the king of Prussia from his dominions, and terminated his memorable campaign, by the peace of Tilsit? The reader will be enabled to judge by the document which I give at the end of the volume. It is a curious, and exceedingly rare composition.[1]

It is quite as well, too, for us to bear in mind that the Russian armies, which, for centuries, have *overthrown their adversaries in all parts of the globe*, by their *valour*, their *triumphs*, and their *intrepidity*, were, in spite of all this, utterly destroyed at Eylau and Friedland, just as, two years previously, they had been drowned and cut to pieces at Austerlitz.

## III.

Russia, by her enormous population, and geographical position, is, without the slightest doubt, a power of the first class, but she is a passive power, whose

[1] See Appendix, B.

weight would never be decisive in the balance of treaties, unless backed up by one of the two great German powers. We place her in her true rank, but we must not believe in the fabulous destiny predicted for her by most statesmen who know nothing of the country, save what they have seen on the map.

The fact of her placing her armies, and her money, gratuitously, at the disposal of Austria, to enable the latter to suppress Magyarism, betrays rather her pangs of wild alarm, than proves her devotion to her ally.

From 1848 to 1851 her fears were intense. She felt ill at ease during those three years, and nothing short of the re-establishment of the empire in France could again inspire her with confidence, although she recognised it with a very bad grace, and cavilled at the protocols usual between different sovereigns.

During this period, I repeat, her fears were so great, that in a cabinet council, at which the Emperor Nicholas presided in person, it was debated whether all the peasants should not be emancipated at one stroke. Orders had been issued to the military and civil governors of the fifty-four provinces of the empire, as well as to the principal manufacturers, to study the necessities of the case, and report what concessions were most imperiously called for. But since the *coup d'état* of December, 1851, which ruined the hopes of Socialism, the terror of Russia has gradually subsided. The projects of emancipation, inspired by fear, slumber at present in the portfolios of his Czarish Majesty.

We will add a few more words previously to terminating this introduction.

After a profound peace of now nearly forty years, Europe sees the probability of being involved in one general conflagration.

The disasters occasioned by the wars of the conclusion of the last century, and the commencement of the present one, have gradually become effaced. Shall industry and commerce—whose progress, not even the events of 1848 had been able completely to arrest, and which have carried abundance, comfort, and prosperity into the most remote regions of Europe—be now placed at the mercy of the torch of the first Cossack who shall receive orders to fire the world?

The war with which Russia threatens mankind is not a war of conquest, nor a war of propagandism, or preponderance; it is a war of religion in which she is about to engage, as we are told, in the name of her clergy, and her fanatical population.

By whom is Russia urged on to this pretended religious war?

Is it by the army?

Among all nations living in a state of civilisation, there exists a governmental axiom, which is this:—The army never reasons or deliberates.

If, then, in the civilised and free states of Europe, the army exercises no influence on the decisions of the government, involving or compromising the future prospects of the country, how can we believe that the Russian army, the offspring of slavery—the army which,

taken individually, merely represents a number of walking war machines, and, collectively, the only instrument by which slavery is held in respect—can compel the Czar to march forward to the conquest of Saint Sophia!

Is it by the people?

There is here a distinction which we must bear in mind:

There are two distinct streams of population which roll through Russia, without ever mingling with each other—the serfs and the nobles. The middle classes do not exist, for we cannot designate by this name a few thousand merchants, some of whom have remained faithful to the cultivation of large beards, and thick, shock heads of hair (a race that is distinguished as the Russian party), while the others flatter the weakness of the Czar, by civilising themselves,—that is, by shaving their beards, and wearing their hair close cropped (this party is that of young Russia).

Now, if the slave possessed, as some people have wished it to be supposed, any influence, it is most certain that the first crusade he would undertake would be one to obtain his freedom—it would be one to deliver himself as soon as possible from the servitude of the knout and the stick.

Is it in the name of a population of this description that the autocrat demands, lance in hand, privileges for the Christians of the Ottoman Empire? Out of sixty-six millions of inhabitants, there are not more than from twenty to twenty-two millions—forming the real

Muscovite nucleus—who profess the Greek ritual. The rest are Protestants, Catholics, Mohammedans, Idolators, Parsees or Pagans, and trouble themselves very little about the question of the Holy Places, and still less as to whether the church in the East is or is not molested by the Turks.

Besides, if it were really true that it is in the name of these twenty-two millions of Russians professing the orthodox Greek religion, that this crusade is now being undertaken against the Turks, it would be necessary for us to be informed—and it would be a very curious piece of information—how these twenty-two millions of slaves, who are nothing more or less than mere brutes, —who, like animals, possess but one mechanical and walking action, which action is even confined to the village or estate on which they are trained up,— managed to convey their wishes to his Czarish Majesty? They, who do not even possess the right of complaining directly to the Czar of the cruelties they suffer at the hands of the noble, whose beast of burden, whose plough-horse, whose property, they are, without exposing themselves to the utmost rigour of the law![1] —they, who are ignorant that they are made after the image of God; who do not know a word of the Bible, nay, not so much as a word of prayer!—they, who imagine, in imitation of the people of ancient times, that the world ends where Russia ends;—they, who, in a word, have not the consciousness of their individuality, nor,

[1] Art. 950, and following ones, of the Russian code concerning slavery.

perhaps, even that of their existence, unless it be after the manner of mere animals!

Is it the clergy?

To believe that the Russian clergy possesses a power capable of swaying the policy of the Czar, is to believe in an absurdity. To suppose it exerts a moral influence which would force such a mission on the Russian government, we must be unacquainted with its customs, its relative position with regard to the state, and what it calls its institutions.

The Russian church enjoys, so to say, no constitution. The Czar governs it as he governs his army and his serfs. He is the head, the born-president, of the holy synod, the vice-presidentship of which is vested in one of the metropolitans of the empire. The five councillors of this kind of tribunal are named by the choice and will of the Czar, to whom they all take an oath of *obedience* and *fidelity*. The autocrat, not being able to attend to temporal and spiritual affairs at the same time, causes himself to be represented at the holy synod by one of his aides-de-camp, a cavalry officer, who alone has the power of proposing and discussing all the regulations of the church. Such things as amendments, or contradiction, are unknown; no one ever thought of offering any opposition, and General Protosoff governs the clergy as he would a regiment.

Is it some few thousand monks, living in the depths of the forests, in a state of the most profound ignorance, in grossness, and in depravity, who would ever involve the Emperor in the chances of a war capable of over-

throwing the world, and Russia, perhaps, first of all? Assuredly no!

Is it the nobility?

They are, perhaps, greater slaves and more maltreated than the serfs; besides, the Czar has accustomed them too well to a state of passive obedience, and one in which they are too much used to bow their neck beneath his foot, for them ever to dare to exert any influence upon him. Up to the present time, the Emperor has been the master of his government; he has always guided his country according to his own personal inspirations, and consulted only his own will.

To suffer the influence of any one whomsoever, would be for him to abdicate his throne.

## THE ARMY.

### I.

Algarotti has said that St. Petersburg is the window through which Russia is continually looking out upon Europe. The simile is a happy one, for it presents to our minds a perfect picture of the Czar, watching—with marvellous sagacity for his own aggrandisement and the preservation of his conquests—the faults committed by Europe.

We cannot avoid confessing that the means, of all kinds, at the disposal of Russia, are formidable; but, in this respect, the weight with which she bears down upon the West is derived less from her own real and permanent strength, than from the state of ignorance in which all our governments still remain with regard to her resources and her customs.

Her passive power is enormous; this is as incontestable as the light of day. No one would ever think of attacking her behind her deserts of ice and snow, where she is naturally entrenched. All the armies of the world that attempted to do so would inevitably meet with ruin and death.

The Russian soil, properly so called, is covered with



Cuirassier of the Guard. | Imperial Guard. | Chasseur of the Guard. | Cossack of the Guard.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY—REGULAR TROOPS.

sombre and still virgin forests. What land there is capable of cultivation is a mere accident, and even this land, with some rare exceptions, is almost completely unfruitful, and for the greater portion of the year under water. The arts and manufactures are yet in their infancy in Russia, and its trade is but poor. In spite of its mines in the Oural mountains and Siberia, gold and silver are rare, while its paper-money is not current throughout the whole empire, many of the provinces having rejected it. But if the country is poor in coin, we must acknowledge that articles of the first necessity are so cheap that a man can be fed, clothed, equipped, and armed, at one-eighth of the cost in France.

In spite, however, of the unfruitfulness of the soil and the severity of the climate ; in spite of its despotic government, and the degraded condition of its population, Russia has increased in the most unprecedented manner.

Scarcely a century since, Russia inspired neither uneasiness, fear, nor jealousy. Although already powerful, she was, by her strange customs and her form of government, placed so far beyond the sphere of the political action of Europe, that she was only spoken of as a country peopled by savages, inhabiting the holes of rocks, or the hollows of trees, and living on raw and stinking meat and fish. She was unknown. We had more to do with China than with her. She possessed no navy, no army, no manufactures, and, so to speak, no language or national customs.

Despite all this, she suddenly rises up before the eyes of astonished Europe, and, from the first day of her appearance, aspires with haughty insolence to the dominion of the world by putting forth claims to the dictatorship of Europe.

Strange fact! Such as this nation was when it first felt the influence of civilisation, two centuries ago, such is it at the present hour. It has not advanced a single step; it has remained exactly in its original state.

From whatever side we view it, it has absolutely nothing European about it.

I have just said that scarcely a hundred years have elapsed since the Russians had neither an army, a navy, nor any system of administration. At present, they possess formidable fleets, and prodigious arsenals, in which all the iron, bronze, and copper of Siberia have been accumulating, for the last fifty years. They possess armies supported by innumerable tribes of wandering Cossacks, sufficient to make men apprehend an invasion of barbarians, a hundred times more disastrous and redoubtable than the hordes of Attila which crushed the Roman Empire, for the Russians are more destructive than their predecessors. Did they not overthrow and raze to the ground the town of Caffa, and almost all the towns of the Crimea, to obtain the leaden pipes of the fountains, and to steal the copper and the iron which decorated and sustained the public edifices, the minarets, and the cupolas? Did they not destroy the marbles of the palaces, the sarcophagi, and the bas-reliefs, to build their huts,

sweeping away objects of art which centuries had respected?

II.

Although this empire appears, in the eyes of sceptics, to be like a harlequin's jacket, sewn together, more or less strongly, of five hundred incongruous pieces, it is, for all that, peopled by sixty-six millions of human beings, and this enormous population is increasing, every year, at the rate of more than eight hundred thousand souls!

From east to west, from Petropaulowsk, in the depths of Asia, to Kalisch, beyond Warsaw, is a distance of fourteen thousand five hundred versts,—that is to say, a length of 10,875 English miles; while the distance from Alexandropol or Sebastopol to Archangel—from north to south—is three thousand three hundred and sixty versts, which represent 10,080 miles.

This immense extent of country is dotted over with more than a thousand cities, three of which have each a population of more than a hundred thousand souls: these three are the capitals,—Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Warsaw; six towns have populations of from forty-five to sixty thousand souls; twenty-three have more than twenty-thousand; seventy-five, from ten to twenty thousand; one hundred and forty-one from five to ten thousand; one hundred and seventy-six from two to five thousand; one hundred and thirty-eight from a thousand to two thousand; seventy-one

somewhat less than a thousand; and so on: while in addition to these towns, there are countless thousands of villages.

A single man governs this country, and governs it as an inflexible and inexorable autocrat. His will—supreme, unique, never contested, and never even discussed—stretches, in all directions, to the extreme points of his empire with the certainty of the telegraph.

This would, at first sight, lead us to believe that, in politics, ignorance and barbarous manners are the best guarantees of moral and social order, for I have seen these sixty-six millions of souls—or brutes, if you prefer the term—yielding blind obedience, bowing their necks and grovelling beneath the feet of their Czar, but ready to rise, with one bound, at the first signal from him, if the whim of endeavouring to crush the old world, with his armed avalanches, should by chance enter his head.

This extent of Russia is what, in the eyes of many persons, constitutes its force. But they are mistaken! It is, on the contrary, the cause of its weakness.

Of all the various races which acknowledge the authority of the Czars, there is not one which has merged into the great Russian Unity which the Emperor Nicholas has so perseveringly attempted to effect.

Each of these races has preserved its nationality, its language, its religion, its customs, and even its own peculiar laws; and, among those who are the most op-

posed to these attempts to bring about a fusion, the very members of the great Sclavonic family are not the least eager to reject them. These races are not bound to each other by any natural affinity, or any common interests, either political or commercial: they all desire to live after their own peculiar fashion, and they can do so. Russian Unity is a chimera. All these remarkable races, strangers to each other, arbitrarily agglomerated by the chances of politics and war, and sewn together like so many pieces of various colours, are only maintained in their present condition by skilful Machiavelism, and a system of inexorable discipline, the workings of which absolutely stupify the mind.

If, to-morrow, the genius which governs this empire with a will of iron, were to disturb this fabulous equilibrium; if an easy or incapable Czar were to succeed the eminent man who, at this moment, presides over the destinies of the country, and occupies a throne founded on so many different elements, Russia would, very soon afterwards, fall into a thousand pieces.

What affinity can there be between the Poles and the Cossacks, who, the very day after their submission, regretted the independence of their previous nomade life?

What affinity can there be between the Germans of the shores of the Baltic and the Greeks of the Crimea? or between the Swedes of Finland and the inhabitants of all the ranges of the Caucasus?

This vast assemblage of heterogeneous races and tribes would evidently be dissolved in a few hours, were it

not held together by a formidable army, and Russia would perish as did the Roman empire, with which, by the way, it possesses more than one point of resemblance.

At the first summons to rise in insurrection, or if Russia were once engaged in a serious war, who can say where the conflagration would end? At Rome, slaves were rigorously excluded from military service; in Russia, on the contrary, slaves are the only persons who carry arms. The remembrance of Ikelman Pugatscheff, that second Spartacus, is not yet effaced from the memory of many, many Russians.

## III.

The effective force of the Muscovite armies, which, for the last thirty years, and especially since 1848, have excited such lively interest in men's minds, is not at all exaggerated.

These masses of cannons, men, and bayonets, are, however, not to be looked upon as a permanent cause for dread, as people are pleased to imagine. Russia is positively obliged to maintain them, in order to protect its immense surface, and guarantee from attack its coasts and frontiers, which extend for some thousands of miles along kingdoms, empires, and provinces, which an unexpected cause might bring down upon it, because almost all of them have to recover some territory or other, wrested from them by violence.

The army is divided into three very distinct cate-



Grenadier. Chasseur of the Guard. Fifer of the Guard. Dragoon. Cuirassier. Hussar.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY—REGULAR TROOPS.

gories, possessing nothing in common with each other. These are:—

The Imperial Guard, the Army in Active Service, and the Military Colonies.

The Imperial Guard consists of twelve regiments of infantry, two regiments of hussars, two regiments of lancers, four regiments of cuirassiers, two regiments of *specimens*[1] (one of infantry and one of cavalry), two regiments of Cossacks, and seventy-two field-pieces, besides two Cossack batteries and a pontoon-train.

The cavalry regiments are eight hundred men strong, divided into six squadrons. The infantry regiments are four thousand men strong, divided into four battalions, the fourth battalion belonging to the reserve for the instruction of the recruits.

This Guard forms in itself a regular *corps d'armée*.

In this account I have not reckoned several squadrons furnished by the wandering tribes, such as the Kirghises, with their glittering coats of mail, and their bows and arrows; the Circassians, the Georgians, and the Armenians, who are never called upon to do any more serious service than to parade themselves on the occasion of grand festivals or grand reviews. The effective force of these squadrons varies considerably.

The Army in Active Service is formed of nine corps. Each of these corps is exactly divided, like the Imperial Guard, into twelve regiments of infantry and four regiments of light cavalry (two of chasseurs and two of

[1] See Appendix, C.

lancers), with seventy-two field-pieces and a pontoon-train.

Besides these corps, there are two others of heavy cavalry, dragoons and cuirassiers, each consisting of ten regiments.

In addition to several detachments, formed principally of Cossacks, which guard Siberia and the wooden fortlets bordering the right bank of the Oural, Russia counts upon its lists of forces in active service:—1st, the corps of Orenburg; 2nd, the corps of the Caucasus; 3rd, the corps of Finland—each of which is formed on a similar plan to that of the army in active service, and always counts an effective force of forty thousand men; and 4th, three detached corps of Cossacks, one of which is called the corps of the Kuban, another the corps of the Oural, and another the corps of the Crimea.

Next come the vast Military Colonies, the creation of the Emperor Alexander and his favourite Avatcheïeff, some of which are placed in the centre of the empire, stretching across the road that connects the two capitals, on the banks of the Volkov, near Lake Ilmen and Novgorod, and some at Mohilew, Vitepsk, Ecatherinoslaw, and other places. All these colonies united form together ten more distinct military corps, divided in the same manner as the army in active service, and, like that, furnished with artillery, pontoon-trains, and cavalry.

Lastly, there is what the Russians term the Reserve, comprehending all soldiers either out of service or disbanded. It would be difficult to obtain from these men any other service than that of performing duty in the



Lesguin. Cossack of the Don. Circassian. Tartar Cossack of the Crimea. Cossack of the Caucasus. Cossack of the Ural.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY—IRREGULAR TROOPS.

fortified towns in the interior of the empire, or of acting as gabelmen on the more distant coasts.

All these corps united give a total of nearly FIFTEEN HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN in active, or quasi-active, service, of which more than ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND are cavalry. These numbers will strike the reader as fabulous, but they are incontestably correct.

IV.

The army is kept up by a system of recruiting. The number of men to be furnished by the Boyars[1] is determined, every year, by the state. The choice of the individual men is left to the arbitrary judgment of the nobles or their intendants. Provided the recruits are neither halt, nor lame, nor blind, the government accepts all that are sent, without troubling itself in the least about their moral condition.

The Boyar and his intendant begin by satisfying their personal hatred and antipathy, whatever may be the importance of the wrongs for which they seek satisfaction. They care very little about breaking up a family, or tearing away a son from his father and mother, infirm old people who will be left without assistance and support; they spread desolation and misery in every house which has resisted their exactions, and, when a recruit is taken, his son, if he be less than ten years old, follows him.

[1] The feudal nobility.

After having gratified their feelings of vindictiveness, they proceed to cleanse all the villages of robbers, vagabonds, rogues, thieves, idlers, drunkards, and incendiaries, until they have made up the number which they are obliged to contribute to the *quota* required of the district.

The government itself seizes and enlists, on its own authority, and without appeal, all awkward coachmen, and thieves whose muscular force adapts them for being converted into machines of war.

As soon as the selection is made, the authorities proceed to the toilet of the men they have taken. In order to prevent desertion or flight, they cut their hair very short in front, and almost shave it behind, and then send the recruits off to the chief town of the district, where they are delivered into the custody of a non-commissioned officer, charged with the task of conducting them to the depôt, whence they are drafted off into the different regiments and drilled.

The army is, as we see, composed, for the most part, only of the very dregs of the serfs; no other method of recruiting it is ever practised in Russia.

This explains the profound feeling of horror, the invincible aversion, of the entire Russian population for military service. There never was, to my knowledge (and I have also been informed so by others) an instance of any one enlisting of his own free will.

But, say the Russians, as soon as he becomes a soldier, the peasant is emancipated; at the expiration of twenty-five years' service, he is free! Exquisite state

of freedom, indeed, which obliges him, for three quarters of his existence, to bow his head and bend his shoulders beneath the most severe and odious system of discipline in the world!

When a man is once enlisted, the brutality of his instructors, the cruelty of his officers, the privations of every description which he has to undergo, and the passive, animal-like submission to the requirements of a torturing system of discipline, soon reduce him to the level of a mere walking machine.

At the expiration of twenty-five years of service, supposing he has not been condemned to remain a soldier all his life, whether he be infirm, whether he be used up, broken, without strength or not, a man is discharged. The state owes him nothing, and gives him nothing—but the liberty of providing, in any manner he can, for his own support and that of his family. If he is merely lame or deaf, he becomes a fireman or a breaker of stones upon the highways, two occupations which offer the advantage of placing him temporarily beyond the absolute danger of dying of hunger. But to attain so favoured a condition as this, he must have *patronage!*

Most of the men, on their discharge, become ostlers, porters, or beggars. Some drag out a miserable existence of suffering along the public roads, in the endeavour to regain the village in which they were born, but they are received by the boyar, who, cudgel in hand, exclaims: "Avaunt, venomous beasts! in this place I have, and will have, only slaves!" so

that, to enjoy the privilege of obtaining food, and a roof to protect them, the unhappy wretches are compelled once more to become serfs! Some of them turn robbers, and seek a refuge in the immense forests which cover the surface of the country. They live by rapine, by hunting, and by robbing travellers. Neither the police nor the government troubles its head about them, or ever thinks of pursuing them, for the police cares nought about any persons save those whom it can despoil, and what could it obtain from a soldier covered with rags, or what could it do with a man whose strength is gone and whose constitution is broken?

The operation of recruiting is long and difficult. The difficulties are not caused by the men alone, but also, and to a greater extent, by the nature of the country itself and of the climate, which no mortal power can ever overcome. There are no highways, save those which connect St. Petersburg with Moscow and Warsaw. The empire is intersected with paths, and cross-roads running over marshes, spongy land and moving sands, into which men and horses sink up to their middle.

The recruits, who are sent from all parts of the empire, from the Oural, the Don, the Dnieper, the Vistula, and the Nieman, to St. Petersburg and Moscow, traverse these enormous distances on foot, badly fed and never housed, through the rain and snow, and over roads that give way beneath their feet. In the eyes of the government, this is not looked upon as a difficulty; beasts make the journey, and, therefore, men can make

it as well. But we are not informed how many death carries off before the end of the journey is reached. In addition to this, all these men are of different origin, and do not speak the same language, so that the task of instructing them is a long and difficult one.

What matters all this to the Russian government? it is not stopped by trifles like these. What words cannot convey into the heads of the poor brutes, will be beaten into them with the stick.

## V.

The pay of the Russian soldier is nine shillings and two-pence a-year; and his food consists of a little less than eighteen quarters, twenty-two pounds, two ounces of coarse wheaten flour, mixed with bran and flour made from rye. A colonel does not get thirty-two pounds sterling, and a full surgeon receives the same pay as a colonel. A captain receives twelve pounds sterling; and so on for the other officers. Most of the officers and even of the soldiers are married!

The married soldier, if he is at the same time a father, receives three-tenths of a penny supplementary pay and half a pound of flour daily for himself and his family. Besides this, government gives him lodgings in barracks.

Ten, twelve, and sometimes as many as twenty or thirty, different families live promiscuously, in the fullest acceptation of the word, in the same room; the only thing done in the cause of morals being to surround each bed by a coarse paper or canvas screen,

which the soldiers manufacture themselves. It is behind these screens that the nuptial rites are consummated, in the hearing, if not in the sight, of a roomful of people; it is behind these screens, upon a low, fœtid bed, that the women are confined, and that the children are brought up to fear and respect the Czar.

When a soldier begets male children, his condition is ameliorated; the crown adds a ration of flour for each male child. Until they are eight or ten years old, the children remain with their parents. When they have attained this age, government places them in the military schools, where they are rigorously fashioned to the military yoke. At sixteen or eighteen years of age they enter the army in active service, as non-commissioned officers, and remain in this grade all their life, there being a special law which prohibits their advancement. As for the girls, the state does not derive any advantage from them, and therefore gives them nothing. They are, poor creatures, a real calamity to their parents, who see themselves bowed down by fresh burthens without the hope of their rations being increased a single ounce. No one ever troubles his head as to how the soldier will provide for their subsistence. As for education, they receive none.

In the imperial guard, the soldiers are somewhat more favoured than those of the army in active service. When one of them has a son, he is allowed to supplicate the Emperor to stand godfather to him, and the Emperor never refuses this favour and mark of honour. He causes the new-born infants to be held at the font,

a dozen at a time, by one of his aides-de-camp, who, after the ceremony, makes the father a present of two shillings and eleven-pence. The protection of the Czar is limited, for the moment, and also for the future, to this. He shows the same honour only to those officers who are notoriously without resources; in such cases he relieves their distress with a sum of money, which never amounts to more than a few hundred rubles.

As you perceive, reader, Russia has copied a great deal from the institutions of the Chinese. In China, the government encourages, as much as it possibly can, the marriages of soldiers, and, as is the case in Russia, assigns so much pay to male children from the moment of their birth.

## VI.

I have mentioned the prodigious number of soldiers and cannons: I must now speak of the officers. If the privilege of birth were always accompanied by that of intelligence and merit, nowhere in the world would there be so many good officers as in Russia. The nobility alone can reach the higher grades. The members of the feudal nobility very seldom enter the army; they have a horror of military servitude, and, in spite of all the Emperor's efforts, prefer living in indolence and luxury, or filling at court the offices of grooms, valets, or cooks. The second order of nobility, called the *Tchinn*, is in almost undisputed possession of all the various grades. There never was such a thing

known, as a soldier of fortune rising from the lower to the superior ranks of the army. It never entered the brain of any Russian to think, and still less to believe and to say, that every soldier, as in France, carries the baton of field-marshal in his knapsack. The Russian who gave utterance to such an assertion, would be looked upon as the most abominable of revolutionists. The members of the tchinn possess neither peasants nor estates. They live, at least the greater number of them, on the emoluments of the posts they occupy, and, in some slight degree, like all other persons holding offices under the Russian administration, on the produce of their venality and plunder.

Brought up in special schools, at the expense of the government, the officers quit their studies while very young, with a commission. They do not inspire the soldier with any feelings of respect, either by their behaviour, their disposition, or by habits of reflection matured by the influence of serious and scientific studies.

Rank is not given to merit; the only road to it is favour.

Each regiment has its own treasury, into which the Czar pays a certain fixed sum, with which the commanding officer is bound to provide for all the wants of his soldiers, such as firing, food, clothes, etc. But as this sum is well known to be insufficient for the purpose, the soldier, when not on service, is obliged to seek for some other means of providing for his own subsistence and that of his family. If he knows no skilled manual calling, he becomes, in turn, according to circumstances, porter,

water-carrier, sweeper, labourer, and messenger—he unloads the vessels in the ports and alongside the quays —he wheels away in barrows, saws, cleaves, piles up, and carries firewood into the various houses. In the evening, he is a supernumerary at the theatre. He is obliged to give a part of his time for the common good, and what he then earns goes to the funds of the regiment. The barracks are literally so many permanent bazaars, where men are hired for all descriptions of work, at so much a-day. Does any one require twelve or twenty pairs of arms? If he does, they are sent to him, under the escort of a corporal.

The commanders of the regiments of the imperial guard, being under the immediate eye of the Czar himself, perform their duties as treasurers and administrators with tolerable regularity. It sometimes happens, however, that the funds of the regiment vanish at a game of cards. If the dishonest officer has no friend or family to be responsible for his embezzlement, nothing is left him but suicide, Siberia, or military degradation, which is always followed by his becoming a common soldier *for life*.

But in the interior of the country, at a distance from the supervision of the Czar and the direct action of the government, abuses in the administration of the army in activity are more frequent; and there have sometimes been cases, in which whole army-corps, men and horses, have been decimated by hunger, cold, and disease. Exactly in the same degree as the imperial guard is gaudily decked out from head to foot, are the

corps of the army in activity ragged and wretchedly kept. I myself saw, in September, 1848, the army in activity encamped in Poland. Its appearance was most saddening: the clothing of the troops was worn threadbare by long use, and grossly patched up, while the lean aspect of the men themselves betrayed too plainly hunger and every other kind of privation.

A few years since, the army of the Caucasus presented a spectacle of abject wretchedness which would have surprised people, if people in this country ever could be surprised at anything. The Czar, happening to cast his eyes, by chance, over the returns made to the ministry of war, and which he was accustomed to sign as a matter of course without perusing, perceived with horror the immense amount of mortality in one of the corps stationed on the lines of the Kuban. Even at the period when the cholera was raging with the most fearful violence throughout the empire, death had never mowed down so many men. "The cause of this frightful state of things was unknown:" such was the answer given to the Czar. Upon this, he sent one of his aides-de-camp to inspect the corps. On his return, the aide-de-camp asserted that the army wanted for nothing, though the Emperor knew that both men and horses were in a state of the utmost wretchedness. The aide-de-camp was sent back to observe things more closely. Again he returned and again he affirmed that he had found everything in its normal state. This aide-de-camp and the commander of the corps, who had bought his silence, were both degraded, and re-

duced to the ranks. Similar examples of justice and severity are often met with in the life of the Emperor, but so profound is the evil which devours his dominions, that he has never been able to eradicate it completely.

## VII.

In the cavalry of the imperial guard, all the officers belong either to the feudal nobility, for whose encouragement the Czar always keeps commissions and commanderships, or to the Swedish families of Finland, or of the German provinces of the Baltic. The members of the latter are the best officers in the army. To serve in the cavalry it is necessary to possess a private fortune, because the expense of mounting the regiment falls entirely on the officers, in turn, up to the rank of captain inclusively. In the first instance, however, this honour is reserved for the officer who has last joined. The government allows, for this purpose, only a very trifling annual sum, which is far from being sufficient, and is, in fact, perfectly ridiculous. The officer, on whom the expensive task devolves, visits all the studs in the empire, and chooses only horses of the particular size and colour adopted by the regiment. £2,400, and sometimes more, added to the sum allowed by the crown, is not sufficient to mount a regiment.

On their arrival at St. Petersburg, as soon, at least, as they have been allowed to rest and recover their condition, the horses are all inspected by the Czar.

The white horses must not have a single black hair in their coats, nor the black horses a single white one, and so on.

If the Czar is satisfied, a rise in rank, a decoration and a patronising look, are the only rewards received by the officer, who has just made a terrible hole in his patrimony, and, perhaps, ruined himself or his family, to gain them.

In order to rise, every cavalry officer must go through this expensive ordeal. The Czar does not ask him whether he has talent, genius, or courage; all that the Czar requires, is that an officer should be of good family, possess a great deal of money, and spend it generously, to ease the finances of his country. By the adoption of this plan, however, the Czar's cavalry is a perfect model; the men are giants and the horses enormous.

And here, I beg to ask, whom must we pity, whom must we blame? Is it the Czar for keeping up and turning to account, with such skill, the baseness of his nobility, or is it the nobility for its platitude in purchasing its grades by the ruin of all those who are connected with it?

As you have just seen, reader, all the cavalry regiments of the imperial guard are distinguished from each other by the colour of the horses; with the exception of their horses' coats, they are all alike.

VIII.

The Russian soldier does not lead a life like that of other men ; he is a human machine, and that is all.

It is a great error, which many travellers have committed, to assert that the duties of a husband and the cares of a father are the principal causes which prevent the Russian soldier from assuming a smart military appearance. The only cause is that which I have already given ; there is no other.

For nearly thirty years, the Emperor has been making unheard-of efforts to inculcate in the hearts of his troops what is called a military spirit. Up to the present time, he has not succeeded, and he never will succeed, because such a thing is not in accordance with the character of his people. His army is not, and never will be, aught but a troop of automata, tricked out in various costumes, which he moves according to his whim, and causes to sink into the earth beneath an irritated look.

No noble sentiment ever vibrates in these souls, stultified by serfdom, debauchery, and depravity.

Everywhere else in Europe, it appears to me, the soldier represents to our mind a man who has devoted himself to the defence of his country, as much as he does an agent of the public authorities, charged with maintaining order and preserving the most sacred interests of society ; the flag shelters the honour of the

country in all its purity. In Russia, the flag shelters nothing at all; on the contrary, it is the emblem of the most monstrous state of moral degradation.

How could it be otherwise?

Everywhere else in Europe, rank is within the reach of talent, merit, and courage, from whatever class they may spring; it is for all men an inalienable property, which neither the caprice of the sovereign, nor the covetousness of courtiers, can violate, and which cannot be touched, or taken away from its possessor, save in virtue of a lawful judgment and on account of his having committed some offence against the laws of honour. In Russia, the sword of an officer is broken, if he happens to stand in the way of some courtier's promotion, or even if his superiors have taken a dislike to his appearance.

Regarding it from a moral point of view, the Russian army is anything but respectable. Its fundamental vice (the expression is a harsh one, but I use it all the same) is an almost universal spirit of dishonesty, which forms the prevailing characteristic of almost every one. The cupidity of the superior officers in cutting down the rations of the common soldier, authorises the latter to practise the arts of deceit and pillage. In the day time, he lurks about the environs of the city, in the public walks, the by-paths, and the parks, where I myself almost fell a victim to his violence. At night, he posts himself at the passages over the Neva, or walks about the streets, despoiling those who may happen to be out late, and, if he has the

time or is forced to do so by a dangerous and obstinate resistance, cleaves his victim's head with an axe or sabre, and then pushes him under the ice. The next day, he sells the spoils in the open market under the nose of the police, which shuts its eyes and stops its ears, but which opens its hands to receive a goodly portion of the produce of the robbery or murder.

The barracks remain open all night as well as all day, and the sentinels allow any one to pass in and out at all hours. On his return from his marauding expedition, the soldier hastens to invite his family and his friends to a grand entertainment, in which a common kind of brandy plays the first and almost the only part. In his noisy drunkenness he will, perhaps, half confess the truth, and excite the suspicion of some officer, who, out of respect for morality, will give him, with closed doors, a sound cudgelling, which he will receive with his left hand on the seam of his pantaloons, and his right on a level with his ear, in the position of a soldier saluting his Czar.

I always ask myself, on seeing these things, whether Russia possesses the consciousness of its existence. If it does, it can only be after the fashion of animals or savages, who care little for this world and nothing at all for the world to come.

## IX.

In the interior of the empire, the officers of the army in activity are no better off than the common soldiers; they endure the same misery and the same privations. A great number of them, with their breasts covered with orders, beg of such strangers as may be passing through the place where they are quartered. I have seen this with my own eyes: it was the first thing that struck me at Taganrog, when I entered the Russian territory. They might, if they chose, practise, both by day and night, all kinds of robbery and crime, without any risk of being arrested, for an officer in Russia is as sacred and inviolable a being as the Czar himself. If he were surprised in the commission of a crime, he would only have to open his cloak to the patrol, and the latter would allow him to pass on unmolested. Those who have said that Russia is in a state of suppressed anarchy, are right.

Officers of high rank—we have very recently had a proof of this in all the newspapers—increase their pay, we must once again use a harsh expression, by the robberies and fraudulent practices of which they are guilty in the accounts of their administration. The famous revolt of the military colonies at Novgorod, which caused Russia and the throne of the Czar to tremble, in 1831, was caused by nothing save the numberless exactions committed by the staff of the colony.

The facts of the case are as follow :—

The administration of this colony, like that of all the rest, was in the hands of a rapacious and indescribably cruel governor-general. He received the sum due in kind by each colonist to the crown. Out of the produce of the entire colony, he took, illegally and exclusive of his own rations, which he sold, the keep of his own horses and of those of his aides-de-camp, besides exacting something extra for short measure. All the produce was then put in boats and despatched to St. Petersburg and Moscow by way of the Volkov, Lake Illmen, and the canals. In the autumn of 1831, however, the boats were overtaken by a tempest on their entrance into the lake, cast against the shore, and sunk. The governor had them raised, and compelled the colonists to give the state an equal quantity of undamaged produce in the place of that which had been spoilt. This was an odious robbery. Ever since the foundation of the colony, the soldiers had patiently supported many an egregious wrong, for the course of the administration was nought but one uniform system of violence. Every year they had been pillaged, robbed, and beaten. But, on this occasion, the injustice of their superiors was the signal for a formidable insurrection. The soldiers had suffered too long; their vengeance was terrible, atrocious, and savage. Almost all the officers were massacred without pity, and their houses ransacked and burnt. In retaliation for what they had undergone, the troops perpetrated on the officers' wives and daughters the most abominable acts

of bestiality; the poor creatures were all violated publicly in the streets, under the eyes of twenty thousand men, who exhibited the most awful signs of rage and frenzy. These miserable victims were then mutilated, their breasts, eyelids, noses, lips, and ears being cut off! Bound back to back with the mutilated corpses of their male relatives, they were afterwards thrown into the river, or burnt alive in ovens heated to a white heat. For an entire week, without cessation, there was nothing going on, save scenes worthy of maddened cannibals, and a system of carnage such as wild beasts alone would practise. This revolt was just what we might expect from savage hordes loosed from all restraint, and drunk with vengeance long suppressed.

A certain number of officers of superior rank succeeded in escaping from the fury of the troops, and retired on board two or three small men-of-war, at anchor in the middle of the stream.

If a fresh insurrection were to break out, exactly the same scenes would be enacted over again. I most firmly believe that the day on which the first revolution in the palace shall cause these armed bands to rise, Russia's last hour will have come. All the various parts of which it is composed will fall from each other, and join the states from which they have been torn.

## X.

From the 1st to the 5th of May, every year, the Emperor reviews all his guard, who then put on their white trousers. There is still snow in the air, and snow in the streets and on the housetops, with hoarfrost on the trees, and blocks of ice on the river and canals; what matters this, however! it is spring, and the costume in question must be donned to please the Czar; but as the cold is still extremely piercing, and pantaloons of mere linen would paralyse the soldier, the summer pantaloons are slipped on over the winter ones. This reminded me of the supernumeraries of the *Cirque National*, on the boulevards of Paris, whenever military spectacles are represented. They are swathed in three or four different dresses, one over the other, in order to become, as occasion may require, Bedouins, Turks, Cossacks, or soldiers of the Celestial Empire.

Whatever may be the severity of the weather, both the court and the town are obliged to be present at this review. Not one of all those persons who approach the imperial family would, on that day, be impertinent enough to be indisposed. The ladies themselves are not the least eager to flatter the eyes of their master with silk gowns and mantillas of very tender and spring-like hues, under which, however, they take the precaution of enveloping themselves in cotton wadding,

in order not to be killed with the cold. I do not, in sober truth, know whether from having seen this comedy played so often, the Emperor is still the dupe of it.

Followed by a brilliant and numerous staff, the Emperor, at a slow pace and with a haughty and severe look, passes in review the eighty thousand men of his guard. Such is the keenness of his glance, that he remarks the absence of a button. During this time, the soldiers do not move a muscle; they are so many idolators in the presence of their irritated god. When the inspection is over, the troops defile, as straight and regular as obelisks, before the front of the court. Woe to the regiment that bends or breaks its lines; for several months afterwards it will be compelled to go through, without leaving off, during ten or twelve hours a-day, the most fatiguing exercises, while the officers and generals who command it will be loaded, by their superiors, with epithets that defile the lips which pronounce them.

The Russian army is not intelligent. Beneath the European costume in which it is tricked out, it still betrays its origin. Look at it! it presents so heavy and singular an appearance that the least practised eye immediately recognises the disguised peasant, the savage tamed but yesterday, hardly knowing how to march, and studying, to the best of his power, his part of soldier, for which he was not intended. It is only redoubtable by its masses; which, however, can be very efficaciously acted on by grape shot, as we have seen

at Austerlitz, Friedland, and other places. The Russian soldier is not easily shaken. He does not possess that cool energy and contempt of danger, nor that powerful reasoning of true courage, which characterises the French army and makes heroes of men; he is merely a machine of war, which never reasons and is cumbersome to move. His popes, moreover, foster in him the idea that he is invincible, and that the bullet or the cannon-ball destined to kill him, will reach him quite as well from behind as from before; but that, nevertheless, if he turns his back to the enemy, and is spared by death, he will be beaten with the stick and with the knout.

People have often spoken of the passive obedience of the Russian soldier to his orders. I believe in this most implicitly, for his obedience is the natural result of a murderous system of discipline, and is, besides, in keeping with the disposition of the people. On the occasion of an inundation or a fire, the sentinels will rather be drowned or burnt alive than desert their posts.

The penal system for the army is the same as that for civilians. It is as arbitrary as the system of recruiting or the decisions in the courts of law. It may be summed up as consisting of three kinds of punishment: the stick—the knout—and the rod. Hanging is not practised, save for so-called *political crimes* and attempts upon the life of the Czar. To restrain men like these, the blood must flow, the flesh must be hacked about, torn, and cut into bits, in a word, the

criminal must be cut to pieces in the sight of every one. The Russians know nothing of consigning a man to barracks, or condemning him to prison, or inflicting on him any of the military punishments employed in all other countries for the suppression of offences.

I have now drawn a picture of the Russian army. I have magnified nothing, exaggerated nothing, extenuated nothing. Such as I myself found it, have I described it.

Europe stands, therefore, face to face with a million and a half of armed men, whose number, in a few months, the Czar could double or treble, according as the necessity of the case should be more or less imperative. It is, most certainly, not a penury of men which will ever embarrass Russia. That is not the cause of its perplexity. What disquiets and worries the Czar, is money and credit. But money and credit are not the only things which trouble him, and of which there is a scarcity; that which he cannot obtain nor buy at the greatest sacrifice, neither with the knout nor with the stick, is, as I said a few pages back, military intelligence; that unquenchable fire, in a word, of all free nations, the honour of the flag; this he finds impossible to inculcate in his people.

I will conclude by relating a fact, which until now has remained unknown, and which will show how odious and coldly atrocious is the policy of the Czars, when it is under the necessity of freeing itself from those who embarrass it, or whom it fears. In such



THE GRAND-DUKE MICHAEL

cases, it has recourse to the most perfidious means: none are too bad for it.

In the sad and foolish disturbance of 1825, several hundred young men of the highest families were gravely compromised; almost all of them belonged to the army. Five were hanged upon the glacis of the citadel; fifty transported for life into the most savage and unhealthy solitudes of Siberia, and the others drafted into a regiment of the army of the Caucasus. I have before said that a man is condemned to be a soldier for life with fewer formalities than are observed, in other countries, to sentence him to imprisonment for a few days. Thus, in 1831, after the taking of Warsaw, the Czar, without the least regard for the peculiar situation in which several thousand young Poles, who had served in the army of independence, had been placed, defending their country, as they did, against slavery, looked on them merely as revolutionists, and caused them also to be incorporated in the same army of the Caucasus. He would have preferred having them hanged or shot, but he wished to give himself airs of generosity in the eyes of Europe. We shall see what is called generosity in Russia.

About 1835 or 1836, the Grand Duke Michael, the Czar's brother, was sent to the Caucasus, under pretence of inspecting the army, and being present at the decisive blow which the Russians were about to give the ever-reviving power of Schamyl. But his journey was really undertaken for a very different purpose.

Intelligence had been received at St. Petersburg, of

the germs of a secret society having been sown in the army, and the Poles were accused of being the prime movers in the matter. It was necessary that it should be crushed at any price. Immediately after his arrival, the Prince published an order of the day, which he addressed more particularly to the battalions composed of the Poles and the condemned Russians. The moment was come for them, he said, to regain their former position in the mind of the Czar, who was already disposed to pardon and forget their crimes. The troops were about to proceed, he told them, to the assault of an entrenched camp or of a town vigorously defended by the Circassians, and the honours of the day were reserved for these young men alone. He added that he would see them properly supported, should this be necessary. The next day, the Polish battalions set out, and were allowed to get entangled in an ambuscade, where they were all massacred under the very eyes of the Muscovitish Prince, who, two days subsequently, returned to St. Petersburg, and announced to his august brother that he had *purged the army*.

Was this a crime? No—it was a trait of Russian manners!



CIRCASSIAN CHIEFS.

# THE NOBILITY.

## I.

Two classes of nobility are now contending with each other for the future direction of Russia; the feudal nobility and the *Tchinn*. The first is in the exclusive possession of all privileges as well as of the soil and the peasants, while the second alone sways everything connected with the machinery of the public administration, the colleges, the gymnasia, the universities, and the entire course of education in the empire.

This tchinn is a very strange institution; it has not its fellow in the world. Does it represent the middle classes? No. We may, perhaps, assimilate it to our beaurocracy; but it possesses power and influence, and sometimes inspires the government with serious misgivings.

On his return from his travels in Holland, Germany, France, and Italy, Peter the Great reckoned on the transformation of his people proceeding from his aristocracy. He hoped that the aristocracy which surrounded him, perceiving the importance of the reforms which he meditated introducing into his dominions, would lend him its assistance and second him in his efforts. He was wrong. The magnificent boyars re-

sembled then, as they still do even at the present day, so many chiefs of different tribes.

Each village, commanded by the seignorial chateau, was, in fact, a tribe, in which all the authority was divided, without the least control, between the boyar and the priest. Not only did they all energetically refuse to lend themselves to the innovations of the Czar—innovations which, after all, were calculated to augment and strengthen rather than lessen their power—but raised a thousand obstacles and impediments in his way. Their opposition was, indeed, so violent sometimes, that the Czar was obliged to overcome it with the sabre and the axe. As may easily be believed, his ukases were not always looked on as right. His reforms were too profound, and struck too much at the roots of things; they wounded the Oriental indolence and the old prejudices of the nobles.

Irritated at seeing himself misunderstood by the very persons on whose assistance he thought he had the greatest right to reckon, since he did not deprive them of any of the numerous privileges which they enjoyed, and filled with bitterness at seeing these boyars prefer the debauchery and orgies of a life of luxury to the sweets and advantages of a state of civilisation, ready made to their hands, he revenged himself on their indifference.

Had the aristocracy possessed only a single head, that head would have immediately been severed from its body. There was something of Richelieu as well as of Nero in the nature of the Czar. But the aristocracy

was numerous and powerful; he was obliged to treat it with consideration.

II.

He turned his eyes elsewhere. He sought among the mass of his people for men who should assist him in preparing his country to receive the seeds of civilisation, and in initiating it into his grand and sublime plan for the future.

By a ukase, he declared that all persons who served the state, either in a civil or military capacity, should be entitled to the same distinctions as the feudal nobility; that they should enjoy the same privileges and prerogatives (except hereditary rank and the right of possessing slaves); and that they should be promoted, according to their merit and fitness, to public offices, observing, in their advancement, the rules of a military hierarchy; in a word, he formed a regiment of all the officials employed in the administration of his vast empire.

The titles, grades, and distinctions created by Peter I. remain unaltered at the present day.

In the first class of the tchinn are ranked the titles of field-marshal, high-admiral, and grand-chancellor of the empire.

In the second class are ranked the titles of generals, admirals, governors of provinces, marshals of the court, and councillors of the senate.

In the third class are ranked the vice-admirals, the grand-equerries, and the procureurs of the senate.

In the fourth class are ranked the chamberlains, rear-admirals, major-generals, etc.

In the fifth are classed the post-captains, the secretary of the Emperor's cabinet, colonels in the army, the officials of the post-office, of the imperial stables, etc.

In the fourteenth and last are ranked the valets-de-chambre of the Czar and the princes, the supernumeraries employed in the public offices, etc.

The feudal aristocracy did not, at first, perceive the trap which the Czar was laying for it. Perhaps even he himself did not imagine what a future he was opening to this army of scribes. The feudal nobility saw in this institution only a pettish whim of Peter's, a mere bait thrown to emancipated slaves and sons of tradesmen, for consenting of their own free will to devote themselves exclusively to the interests and affairs of the state. It laughed at this petty nobility, which, however, was destined to grow up by its side; but which, and this is an important fact, was not allowed to hold either landed property or slaves. It thought that Peter was only endeavouring to create for himself a nursery of devoted officials, who would spare it, the feudal nobility, which hitherto had been the sole power in the state, the trouble, annoyance, and drudgery of public affairs. It did not perceive that the Czar, by removing it from the government, wrested from it its influence for ever, and that on some future day, still far distant doubtless, it would be at the mercy of the tchinn, a new kind of aristocracy, but an envious and jealous aristocracy, as everything sprung from nothing

is, when it begins to grow strong; and an aristocracy which is also destined, sooner or later, to become an object of real danger to the state.

The hatred of the tchinn was increased every day —like the pride of a parvenu—by the marks of preference which the successors of Peter I. openly showed, on all occasions, for the feudal nobility, whose wealth was regarded with a jealous eye by these emancipated serfs and titled tradesmen.

The last Czars who have governed Russia have, however, skilfully introduced, in certain cases, hereditary rank into the order of the tchinn. In spite of the ancient nobility, they never refused to inscribe in the "Book of Gold" such members of the petty nobility as had deserved well of their country, either by their services in the public administration, or by brilliant actions in the army and navy. To adduce but one example, I may state that Marshal Paskevitsch, Count of Erivan and Prince of Warsaw, sprang from the tchinn.

## IV.

A century has hardly elapsed since the first creation of the tchinn, and it is already a formidable power in the empire, and one which the Czars will henceforth have to respect. At the present day, it alone directs the entire administration of Russia, and occupies almost all the public offices and superior posts. It presides in the senate. It is at the head of the public

tribunals, the army, the navy, and the church. It forms the majority in the councils of the government; in a word, Russia is in its hands.

If this aristocracy of recent date, which is extending every day, remembered its origin and preserved the simple traditions belonging thereto, if it possessed science, education, probity, and aptitude for business, if, at least, it inspired respect by the regularity of its conduct and the purity of its morals, it would be extremely redoubtable. Feudalism would be crushed to-morrow, and the power of the Czars be on the eve of perishing. But it is ignorant, coarse, and vain, feared and hated by the very people from whom it sprang, and whom it treats even worse than they are treated by the boyars themselves.

Recruited from among the ranks of the people, it possesses nothing; it does not enjoy, so to speak, an independence, and subsists solely on the slender income which it receives from the crown. This income is not sufficient for the first and most simple necessities of material existence. Niggardliness in the salaries of officials is the evil which is eating away Russia, for whenever the remuneration for services is insufficient, abuses commence and venality appears. In Russia, venality shows itself under the most hideous and cynical forms, and assumes proportions that are actually frightful; it has, if I may use the expression, become endemial and chronic. The country is eaten up by it to the very marrow. It not only infests the inferior classes of the beaurocracy, but even men in

the highest positions, and the most considerable personages in the empire. From the highest to the lowest, among superiors as well as subalterns, every one has his price, and the evil is still on the increase. We must, however, except from this accusation, some few great names, some few great families, among whom the antique honour and hospitality of the country, are still preserved in all their inviolability.

This wound is so profound and so incurable, it is so fearfully palpable to the eyes of all men, that, one day, the Czar Nicholas let fall these sad words: "The tchinn would rob me of my cannons and my ships, if it only knew where to hide them and to whom to sell them."

In proportion as the tchinn felt its strength, it tried it. Its first victim was Alexander I., for whose death it was waiting impatiently, in order to annihilate the feudal nobility, whose riches and privileges it covets. But it had reckoned without the masculine energy of the eminent man who at present governs Russia.

## V.

There exists an old tradition, accredited at Moscow, and in which the people blindly believes,—namely, that the Czar never reigns more than twenty-five years. Having ascended the throne towards the end of 1825, Nicholas, in the course of nature, ought, therefore, according to this tradition, to have ceased reigning in

1850, and the two opposite parties were prepared, if necessary, to aid in bringing this result about.

From 1839 till towards the end of 1847, a vast net-work of conspiracies spread over Russia. The Czar suspected their existence, but could not seize their thread. The tchinn suffered nothing of its plans to be perceived. Its opposition manifested itself by an eternal small war of piquant jokes and even caricatures, which covered the tables of their saloons, of course without the names of their authors. Nicholas was threatened with the same fate as his father, when the revolution of February suddenly burst out in France. Vienna, Berlin, and Stockholm fell into a state of anarchy, and the populace was guilty of the most abominable excesses. The boyars were seized with fear at this state of liberty, and felt that it would cause the loss of their privileges and fortune. They remembered the massacres of the military colonies in 1831, and trembled lest the same fate should be reserved for themselves. They accordingly once more drew near the court, and grouped themselves around the Czar, whose assassination they had been plotting only the day previous.

As for the tchinn, it believed naïvely in the prophecy of General Lafayette, and continued to conspire. Thanks to the humanity of the Emperor, the conspiracy ended only in the transportation to Siberia of the majority of the conspirators, whom a generous pardon has, since then, sought out beyond the banks of the Yenisei.

We may fearlessly assert that Socialism did the Emperor Nicholas good service, and saved him from death.

The wisdom of the Monarch has, for the present, warded off many dangers. Gradually, however, all fears will vanish; and with the return of calm, ideas of independence will again assume the upper hand. The old feelings of hatred may again be revived, more terrible than ever, between the two castes, both equally incapable of governing the state, but both animated by an ardent thirsting after liberty, and both hating, from the bottom of their hearts, the family of the Romanoffs, who, in their eyes, represent nothing save the most terrible servitude and despotism. What will be the result? No one can say, but we may be permitted to believe that the serf will only take a part in the movement in order to assist in the massacre of those feudal nobles of Tartar origin, who, for we must freely speak the truth of all, have so long and so cruelly oppressed and maltreated him.

On the ruins of the institutions which the tchinn or the feudal nobility will have overthrown, what structure will be built up? An oligarchic republic, the most monstrous of all forms of government, would strike root in this strange land, destined, before the expiration of a century, to see many other singular things. It would not be the first time that this utopian project had entered the heads of Russians. Did not the Princes Dolgorouky vainly attempt the foundation of an impossible oligarchy, in the time of the unfortunate

Peter II., who died under the blows inflicted by their savage brutality? In 1825, too, had not the efforts of Petel Mouravieff and Prince Troubetzkoï, the same object? Moscow would become the seat of government, and we should see in the old Kremlin, that gorgeous palace built by barbarians, a Council of Ten, and,—who knows?—perhaps also a Doge.

In no case, however, would either the tchinn or the feudal nobility emancipate the people from the state of brutal serfdom in which they have ever been kept.

# THE CLERGY.

## I.

Among all nations of the earth, even amongst the most barbarous savages of Polynesia, the priests, or, to speak more generally, the representatives of religion, enjoy a certain amount of consideration, and constitute a power, more or less preponderant, in the state.

In Russia, the exact contrary is the case; they form the class which is the least respected of any.

In every other country, in which the Christian religion has spread its benefits, barbarism has gradually made place for a milder and purer state of morals and manners. In Russia, the contrary is again the case. A state of most foul barbarism is there kept up in the name of religion and of God Himself, by His own ministers. The inequality of social rank is there maintained, with barefaced effrontery, at the very foot of the cross and before the altar.

The Russian clergy obeys none of the precepts of the Almighty or of the Evangelists; it does not preach, catechise, nor teach the doctrines of Holy Writ. It is destitute of that sacred authority which interposes between sovereigns and the rigours of the law. Never, to my knowledge at least, was there an instance of a priest soliciting or obtaining the pardon of

a criminal. So far from this being the case, the Russian clergy, on the contrary, has constituted itself the servile instrument of the government, to keep the population under the yoke of passive and unlimited obedience: it has allowed itself, like the peasant, to be moulded to the most abject servitude. The government, far from endeavouring to ameliorate the moral condition of the clergy by the diffusion of knowledge, does all it can, on the contrary, to increase its ignorance and state of mental darkness, in order the better to assure its own domination.

It is a hard thing to avow, but the Russian clergy is neither learned nor moral. It is intolerant, gross, and debauched; religious sentiment, as well as the instinct of a high order of morality, is entirely unknown to it. It never performs its sacerdotal functions according to the rules of wisdom and simple probity. It directs no one's conscience, because it does not possess that lively faith which carries conviction with it: it does not trouble itself about those who suffer, it does not seek out nor alleviate misery, it dries no tear, cicatrises no wound, and cures no disease of the soul, because it has neither consolation nor hope to offer those who are afflicted and unhappy. It never thinks of correcting vice, and it prays for no one, because no one ever comes to request its help.

Like the chamanes* of the most remote parts of Mongolia, it passes its life plunged in idleness and

* The name given to the native priests.

ignorance. Such is the grossness of its manners, that it does not even feel the want of raising itself in its own esteem, in order to merit the respect and esteem of others. In a word, the Russian clergy does not live for prayer, nor aspire to heavenly things; the priesthood, in its eyes, is not a vocation, but a trade; the only thing it troubles itself about is its material subsistence.

It endeavours to fulfil the office of Providence for no one; it is neither the safeguard of family honour, nor the protector of the peasants against the brutal, depraved, and lustful passions of the boyars, or their intendants, whose oppressive, murderous, and homicidal doctrines it never interposes to check, for it is itself the most hypocritically domineering body of men in the whole world.

II.

In Roman Catholic and Protestant countries the clergy devotes itself, body and soul, to its flocks; but we must not look for anything of the kind in Russia, where the clergy possesses neither pity nor self-devotion. A Russian priest was never seen endeavouring to reform a hardened criminal, or sitting at the bedside of the sick, urging the sufferer to resignation. Their missionaries are not endowed with the heroic spirit which inspires others to make converts in India, Australasia, China, in the most savage countries of the globe, and, in a word, in every place where there are souls

to be enlightened and gained over to God, and who die terrible deaths by the sword of the idolator or the hand of the pagan. For this reason, the Russian clergy has no list of martyrs to offer for our admiration.

Since I am upon the subject of Russian missionaries, shall I tell you, reader, how they fulfil their sacred office? Their baggage does not exactly resemble that of our priests. The latter possess faith, courage, and hope; the former set out upon their expedition, followed by carts loaded with tobacco, brandy, and other strong liquors, and escorted by a few Cossacks, to visit the Samoëdi, the Kamtschatkans, the Laplanders, the Vogouls, and others, whom they attract by the promise of rewards, and, instead of preaching the Gospel, preach intemperance. Each neophyte receives a bottle of brandy, a pound of tobacco, and a salkou (two-and-elevenpence). For half this, these people would become anything—Jews, Christians, or Mohammedans; they would adore the sun or the moon, a camel or a hippopotamus. The missionary immerses them in the first muddy stream he comes across, makes them kiss a large cross, hangs a smaller one round their neck with a piece of string, and converts them without more ado into Christians and members of the Greek church! By the time a village has been thus baptised, all the inhabitants are in a state of intoxication. The missionary then proceeds to the next village, and re-commences, in the same manner, the same kind of religious propagandism, with the same ceremonies and without any Christian instruction. The Russian missionary

does not trouble his head about instruction; he teaches his savages neither to read nor to write; this would be teaching them to think, and the government is not particularly anxious for them to do that.

When the Esquimaux have devoured the proceeds of their baptism, they immediately set out to look for another missionary, whom they request to baptise them again, and give them another gratuity: it is rare to meet one of them who has not been baptised half-a-dozen times. Not one knows a word of prayer; all their religious knowledge is limited to making the sign of the cross.

Formerly, not fifteen years ago, Russian missionaries proceeded with less gentleness, for the government had said to them, "Go and make Christians!" In obedience to this command, they set out, followed by an escort of Cossacks, sword in hand, and lance at their side. On arriving at any tribe, they assembled all its members. Those who would not come of their own free will, were dragged thither by Cossacks, who hunted the poor wretches before them by driving their lances into their backs; those who refused to be baptised were thrown without further ceremony into the water.

If you tell a Russian priest to take the initiative in a work of charity, or to economise in order to assist the wretched being who extends his hand for alms, or the infirm old man who can no longer labour, he will laugh in your face. Acts of sublime devotion, charity, and humility, are virtues not current in the Russian church.

The Russian saints are rare and seldom invoked. The Russians cite scarcely any others than St. Andrew, St. Gregory, St. Dmitry, St. Nicholas, St. Peter, and St. George. The rest are very little known.

I have one remark to make here, and that is, that the Russian calendar offers but a very small number of female saints for the respect of the faithful.

III.

Instances of superstition among the Russians are innumerable. These superstitions do not assume, as with us, a certain appearance of poetry, which renders them excusable; but are, on the contrary, absurd, ridiculous, brutal, and barbarous, like those who practise them. It is easy to see that the people have been but recently converted to Christianity.

The clergy makes no attempt to root out and destroy those superstitious notions, the children of paganism, which are to be met with in countless numbers among the country people, and also the inhabitants of the cities. No—no! the clergy has something else to do. Besides, by working upon their prejudices and superstition, it can govern better, and more easily keep under its yoke, the degraded people.

There is nothing in their religious rites and ceremonies which equals the pomp and the sublime grandeur of the Roman Catholic church. Never did a Russian church echo back the sacred songs, prayers, and canticles which elevate the soul towards its Crea-

tor. The snuffling voice of the popes, whose tones betray their habits of drinking, mingles with the hoarse, brutal voice of the deacon, who alone chaunts a few prayers.

There is no pulpit in a Russian church; of what good would it be, since both the Old and New Testaments are prohibited works, in the same manner as a love-tale is a sealed book to a young girl?[1] Besides, what would a Russian priest say from the pulpit, supposing there was one, seeing that he is endowed neither with the grace of piety nor the power of forgiveness, and since he does not inspire any respect either for his chastity, the purity of his morals, his discreetness, or any of those virtues which even the most indulgent persons expect to meet with in a clergyman?

To enter the Russian church, it is not necessary to possess any certificate of capacity; it is not necessary to be educated, moral, or chaste, or to have devoted years to special study. An educated man would be a dangerous personage! The popes and protopopes do not possess the slightest knowledge of the rudiments of polite learning or the arts; they are ignorant of the laws and history of their country, and hardly know their own language. Under Peter I., and even Catherine II., they knew nothing about it at all. They are not acquainted with the fathers of the primitive church, and have scarcely studied the Sacred Writings. Of what use, in fact, would a knowledge of all these subjects be to

[1] The propagation of the Bible was prohibited in 1826.

them? Would it serve to instruct the people? No! because the people are not beings possessed of minds; for brutes like them, all that is requisite are certain formulæ and superstitious practices.

Any individual can become a priest. As a first step towards learning his business, a Russian is appointed subdeacon, an office which we may look upon as several degrees beneath that of a beadle or sacristan, whose duties he fulfils. He lets his beard and his hair grow, for this is the distinguishing sign of the priesthood. He sweeps out the church, lights the candles, takes care of the holy vessels, and chaunts mass in a tone that is calculated to make the panes rattle in the windows, or even to break them and frighten all the children. His advancement depends upon the volume of his voice: the more formidable that is, the greater chance he has of rising. When a candidate is declared to be sufficiently instructed in his duties, he is consecrated, having first been obliged to marry before he can celebrate mass and enter on his office. He is then sent to some village or other, to stagnate in the same impurities as his predecessors and his masters.

## IV.

It seems a strange thing, that, contrary to the general custom of the country, which is remarkable for anything but gallantry and refinement to the fair sex, all the members of the clergy profess the greatest kindness for their wives, whom they treat with the utmost

consideration, respect, solicitude, and even weakness,—so much so, indeed, that it is often the women who govern the church. The secret of this respect and tenderness, so much at variance with the disdain and brutality of which the women in all classes of Russian society are commonly the victims, is easily explained.

I observed, a few lines back, that, to be qualified for entering into holy orders, the Russian priest must be married; if he is a widower, he cannot pursue his sacred calling without the express permission of his bishop; if this is refused, there are two doors open for him: he either retires into a convent, in which case he has a chance of being made a bishop, or else he hastens to marry again, but he then once more becomes a layman.

Tradesmen's daughters are very partial to marriages with priests, as it promises them a certain amount of domestic happiness.

It often happens that there is but one priest and one church for the entire estate of a boyar, and that this estate contains several villages separated from each other by enormous distances, which it is almost impossible to traverse at any season of the year, save in winter by means of sledges. The peasants, who have neither priest nor church, live like mere brutes.

The priest dwells near his church, which is always situated wherever the chateau of his lord may be. The boyar will not put himself out of the way, even to pray to his God. To spare these corrupted nobles the fatigue of a few steps, a population of several thousand

souls is necessitated to travel seven or eight leagues on foot, across spongy marshes, with water and mud up to their middle, or snow up to their shoulders, at the risk of being engulphed and perishing. The priests have never complained of this state of things. What matters it that the unhappy peasants die like dogs by the roadside, killed by the cold or suffocated in the quagmires? It is certainly a very important affair to trouble one's head about, that a few persons should be suffocated or killed by the cold! Neither the boyar nor the priest takes even as much care of the peasants as the planters of America do for the preservation of a negro. Nowhere in the whole world is a man's life held so cheap as in Russia.

The village cemeteries resemble the yards in our cities where knackers slaughter and flay horses. A hole, some few feet deep, is dug in the earth, and the bodies are thrown into it, without a prayer, and almost without a tear or a last farewell! Nothing on the tomb will ever call to mind the name of him who has just expired, and who now lies beneath the sod. A simple cross, made of two branches of green wood, broken off in the forest, is the only memento placed there. The priest does not put himself out of the way to attend a burial. The dead body is brought to him on a cart or sledge—according to the season—drawn by the nearest relatives of the deceased, or by a cow or horse, without the slightest ceremony whatever.

In the large cities, matters are not managed with more decency or pomp than when a peasant is concerned.

At St. Petersburg, the cemeteries are, so to speak, under water. The tombs are obliged to be raised. In spite of this precaution, however, when a storm drives back the Neva into the streets of the city, the waves beat against and throw down the tombs. The coffins, being carried away by the waters, float along on the gulf or the river, and, when driven by the wind, are stranded in the streets or on the quays of the capital, carrying infection with them. This was especially the case in 1824.

The clergy, like the government, shows no respect for the living; it shows no more for the dead. When there is a scarcity of room, the tombs are profaned, and the corpses, scarcely putrified, dragged out. The bones, still covered with pieces of flesh, and the skulls, with the hair still on them, are scattered around, pell-mell, to whiten on the ground, if the wolves of the neighbouring forests happen not to devour them.

## V.

I repeat it: the Russian clergy is without instruction and without morals. In the country, its members live exactly as the peasants do. They do not enjoy more consideration nor are they better lodged than the vilest of slaves. Their winter costume consists of the skins of beasts; their language is coarse. Were it not for the long floating hair, and long cane which a priest always carries, he would be taken for a moujik. The members of the Russian clergy plough and sow their

fields and gather in their crops themselves: they often sacrifice to Bacchus, and seek in drunkenness to forget their servitude and abject condition.

The official costume of a priest consists of a long robe, either of linen or black or brown silk, according to the means of the wearer, of an overcoat with wide sleeves and cuffs turned up with fur, and of a tall cylindrical cap, ornamented at the bottom with a band of long fur. He wears upon his breast a plated or copper cross, suspended by a chain of the same metal, and carries a large Malacca cane, with a gold or ivory top, like that of a drum-major. This said cane is not less than four feet and a half long.

In addition to performing his sacerdotal duties, the Russian priest exercises the trade of selling *bogs*. These *bogs* are representations of the Virgin Mary, our Saviour, and a certain number of the male and female saints held in most respect by the members of the Greek church. They are coarse paintings on pieces of wood or thin plates of copper. The face and hands are alone visible, the rest of the body being concealed beneath an exceedingly thin tunic of gold or silver foil. The *bogs* in repute are let out, at a very high price, by the week or month. This price varies, however, according to the miracles the pictures have performed, either in favour of women in childbed, or as preservatives against the cholera, etc. If a person is contented with the *bog* he has hired, he ornaments it, at his own cost, with precious stones, according to his means, and over and above the specified price. Such is the barbarous sim-

plicity of the people, that they hire these pictures for the purpose of praying to them, night and day, to rid them of their enemies or of some rich relation whose property they hope to inherit, and who takes a long time to die.

There are certain pictures of virgins which enjoy a greater reputation than others; such, for instance, are those of the *Virgin with three Hands*, the *Virgin of Vladimir*, the *Bleeding Virgin*, etc. Most of these are believed by the people to have been painted by the angels or the Holy Ghost.

The Russians have a great respect for their *bogs*. Whenever they enter a room, they bow three times, almost to the ground, to these pictures, and make the sign of the cross, before they offer their homage to the lady of the house.

VI.

If the clergy is corrupt and ignorant, the monks are absolutely gangrened. I should be obliged to write an entire volume, if I were to narrate all their vile acts. It is among them that Russian ignorance and grossness flourish in all their primitive vigour. The acts of austerity practised by the anchorites of olden times, are things unknown. Continence, temperance, and chastity, are words not found in the dictionary of the Russian language. The monks are penned, rather than lodged, in immense buildings, magnificent without, and repulsively filthy within. According to the national custom, they live, so to speak, *animally*, drink-

ing, eating, sleeping, and chaunting prayers as drunkards sing bacchanalian songs, and without more respect or awe for the sacred edifices. It is not the ordeals of life, reverses, grief, pious exaltation, nor excess of virtue, which induce Russians to devote themselves to the service of religion; it is indolence and voluptuousness. The members of these convents are chosen only from among the lowest individuals of the tchinn, emancipated serfs, small tradesmen, and *tutti quanti*.

There are no sisters of charity in Russia, for where, indeed, should we ever hope to find, among this people of slaves, the superhuman courage of the admirable sisters of the order of Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Joseph, and Saint Maur,—women who end, in self-mortification and penitence, a life already tried by so many struggles and sacrifices, and withdraw from the world to devote themselves to the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor, the infirm, the sick, the old, and the fatherless!

The service of the hospitals is performed by male attendants, who, in the most shameless manner, strip the patients of the little money or other property they had on entering the establishment, or convert into cash the various articles left by those who die. These men sell their attendance and help for ready money only. The cause of this rapacity must be sought for as much in the national character, as in the fact of their receiving no salary, or at least so small a one that it is impossible for them to live on it.

These attendants, moreover, are taken from the

most degraded classes; many of them, for instance, are old soldiers, who can serve no longer. Having themselves suffered, for five-and-twenty years, the most horrible privations, they put into practice the proverb which informs them that charity should always begin at home, and appropriate to their own use the rations destined for the sick. If you speak to them of Christian zeal, devotion, and self-denial, they will ask you, without a blush, whether these virtues ever kept those who practised them! Venality has found its way even into the sanctuary of God. In these holy cities of the sick, this sore is so vast and so terrible, that nine-tenths of the frightful mortality which reigns there, is attributed to the privations and the want of attention to which the patients are subjected, through the embezzlements and frauds of the directors and subordinate officers. The Russians generally have a natural inclination for thieving; the persons admitted into the hospitals never leave them without stealing something or other, no matter what it may be. The attendants have robbed them, and, therefore, they will rob the attendants or the establishment; they will carry off the sheets or the counterpane, and they would carry off even their beds if they could. To guard against these acts of larceny, the convalescent patients are conducted, under a good escort, to the door, which is carefully closed upon them.

Having enumerated the shameful vices and most shameful state of corruption by which the clergy is distinguished, I should like to be able to note down its

good qualities and virtues; but, as the Russians themselves confess, it is very indigent in this respect.

"But," the reader will ask me, "what is the good of such a clergy, if it is really what you say it is? What is the good of it?" The explanation is easy: the clergy is the most docile and most powerful instrument possessed by the Russian government for maintaining the people in the fear of the Czar, and of—God! It serves to keep alive in their breasts the most barbarous superstitions, the most monstrous prejudices, the most odious fanaticism, the most passive obedience, and the most dense ignorance!

The Czar regards these as the best means of governing his people.

VII.

The functions of the priest are limited to baptizing, marrying, and burying the population, and saying the smallest possible number of prayers. The Bible, as I have said, is prohibited. The New Testament has been translated expressly for the use of the people, and the reader would be astonished to see how it has been travestied. The catechism for children teaches and commands them to love the Czar before God, and says that it is a crime to love any one else. As for the prayers, they are confined to the *Pater* and the *Credo*, with the Czar's addition: "I believe in God in heaven and in the Czar on earth . . . ."

A peasant who could read the Bible, or who was discovered reading or explaining it to his family, his

friends, and his neighbours, would instantly be knouted, whipped, and sent off to the deepest of the Siberian mines. We can, of course, easily understand that it would not do for the people to know that they are made in the image of God, like their emperor, their lord, his intendant, and the whole endless catalogue of individuals who plunder and oppress them all the year round. If they ever discovered that they were formed of the same clay as their oppressors, and that Christ preached equality and liberty, what a revolution, what ruin, what acts of vengeance, and what massacres, would the discovery occasion!

The clergy is not paid by the state. It draws its means of livelihood directly from the people in the villages, and from the tradesmen and the boyars in the cities. Once every year, after the Easter festivals, the priest, accompanied by his sacristan, goes round and blesses the rooms, stables, warehouses, shops, workshops, and, in a word, every house, from top to bottom, situated within the limits of his parish, at the same time receiving the voluntary gifts of his parishioners. The sum total of the presents, which are left to the generosity of each individual, amounts to an exceedingly small sum. The best parishes in Moscow and St. Petersburg do not bring in £240. In the villages, the priest does not collect more than is strictly necessary for him to live; and he fleeces the peasants, when the lord of the estate does not provide sufficiently for his wants and those of his family, which is frequently very numerous.

The result of this insufficient, and, above all, this uncertain salary, is that the priest sells the mysteries of religion. He traffics in absolution, confession, baptism, marriage, and everything else, even in the sacrament and the holy bread, just as he chooses. Nothing is to be obtained from him, even for a sick person at the point of death, unless the price has been discussed and settled beforehand! The relatives are obliged to club together to pay for a prayer, while the dying man is waiting; and, most frequently, the latter passes into eternity without receiving the rites he desired.

The Russians have four Lents. The first, which is ours as well, precedes Easter; the second extends from the day of Pentecost to St. Peter's day; the third, from the 1st to the 15th of August; while the fourth lasts for fifteen days before Christmas. The peasants, lower classes, and tradesmen, observe the first with the greatest austerity. During this period, their food is entirely composed of vegetables, salted mushrooms, bitter cabbage, cucumbers, and preserved pumpkins. This regimen, which is anything but substantial under a climate which requires, on the contrary, the use of tonics, is partially the cause of the ravages invariably made by the cholera at the beginning of the year.

VIII.

The ecclesiastical hierarchy, consisting of archbishops, bishops, popes, protopopes, deacons, subdeacons, etc., is nearly the same as in the Latin church. The prelates cannot appoint persons to vacant benefices without the approval of the holy synod. The Emperor's will presides over the most trifling deeds and actions of the clergy. Nothing is done without his participation and consent, and the prescripts of the church are signed by a cavalry general.*

There is no emulation, because there is no advancement. The inferior clergy never rises to the prelacy, because the bishops and archbishops can only be chosen from among the superior members of the monastic orders, such as the archimandrites, for instance, who hold the same rank with respect to Russian convents as the *Generals of the Orders* do in Italy.

The clergy enjoys only one prerogative, which, however, belongs to the feudal nobility as well: it never suffers the knout or the whip. But the Russian government knows very well how to suit the law to its own purpose. When necessity requires it, it causes the offending pope to be publicly degraded, and, after

* See the passages in the Introduction, page 22, treating of the Emperor's influence on the constitution of the clergy.

condemning him to the knout or the whip, has him transported to Siberia.

Above the archbishops are the metropolitans, of whom there are only three in the empire.

The Greek church is what we should have expected her to be when she separated from Rome. She wished to become independent, and has fallen under the brutalising yoke of the sabre at Constantinople and Moscow. For six centuries has she suffered the penalty of her treason. In Russia, the patriarch Nicon wished to raise and deliver her from this state of servitude, but he perished in the attempt. Peter I. recollected Nicon's efforts, and reduced the Russian church to the most complete state of servitude.

In spite of the hubbub made by the clergy, Peter established liberty of conscience in his empire, not that he was more tolerant than his subjects with regard to his clergy, but because he wished to induce foreigners to emigrate and settle in the country, to promote which, the change he introduced was nothing more nor less than a vital condition. After all, this spirit of toleration does not extend to any one save foreigners. For the nation subjected to the sceptre of the Czars, it is but a mere delusion.

It is not long since Russian subjects, whatever they might be—members of the Greek church or idolators, protestants or parsees—who became converts to catholicism, were shut up in a convent for life. Their property was confiscated, and the priest or minister who had effected their conversion was in-

cluded, by the vengeance of the holy synod, in their punishment, while their godfathers and godmothers were sent to end their days in Siberia.

At the present day, the law is quite as severe and quite as brutal as it was twenty-five years ago. It frees from the duty of obedience and from servitude the peasants of every boyar who is converted. This amounts to a confiscation of his estates, since their value is proportioned to the number of slaves who cultivate them.

Converts have only one method of escaping the fury of the Russian clergy, and that is: before they are baptised, to sell their property under some pretence or other, to cause the proceeds to be sent secretly abroad,—for in Russia a man has no greater right to dispose freely of his fortune than of his person—and then to leave for ever this land of tyranny and despotism.

There is not a creed of the old world which cannot boast of having its sectaries and possessing its temple, its church, its mosque, its synagogue, or its chapel, in Russia. The Cossacks, the inhabitants of the Crimea, the Tartars, the Mongols, and most of the nomade tribes, conform to the tenets of Islamism; while the Courlanders, the Esthonians, and the Fins profess Lutheranism. In Georgia, Poland, and the governments of the west, the Roman ritual is predominant.

At Moscow, St. Petersburg, Astrakhan, and Odessa, alone, there are Catholic churches or chapels, in which service is performed by Polish Benedictines.

Everywhere that the Tartar element is predominant, Mohammedanism possesses its temples and public schools. Government tolerates and respects the customs and usages of the people professing this faith, and even permits polygamy.

There is a great number of Jews (several millions) scattered over the Russian territory, but they possess synagogues only in those places where they form the principal portion of the population. They are forbidden, in the most absolute manner, to dwell in Moscow or St. Petersburg. I am ignorant what is the motive of the interdiction. Is it to be attributed to the bustling and active spirit of this people? Be that as it may, however, it is very certain that no Jew can enter or reside in either of the two capitals, unless he has obtained a special permission, which is always sold by the police at a very high price: even then he can only make a stay of three days. Nor can the children of Israel approach these two cities nearer than a certain specified distance, either for the purposes of trade, or for the sake of establishing manufactories.

## IX.

In the skilful hands of the Czar, the Russian clergy is the most precious instrument of government. The effects of catholicism are, by its very nature, civilising, and, for this reason, the Czar endeavours to crush and annihilate it, as far as he can, by a thousand trammels, and all kinds of vexatious proceedings. Russia does

not hesitate adopting the most odious means, and pursuing a course of the most arbitrary action, with scarcely the slightest attempt at disguise, in order to attain the realisation of its daily dream, namely—religious unity.

Poles are only admitted to take part in the administration of the empire on condition of embracing the Greek religion, or at least of bringing up their children to it. If a man desires to please the Emperor, and his police, and wishes never to be disturbed, hunted down, or annoyed by the agents of the latter—if, in a word, he would live quietly, he has no choice in the matter of his religion. He must not hesitate; he must either become a renegade and abandon the faith of his fathers, or make up his mind to be subjected to every possible kind of annoyance; and the Russian police is very fertile in expedients in all that regards this. Every day he feels the effect of its hatred by a thousand outrages, and, whatever precautions he may take in order to live in peace with the police, it is sure to satisfy its vengeance on him somehow. If his neighbour's house is burnt down, he will be accused of setting fire to it; if he himself is a landlord, and his tenants will not pay their rent, justice will stop her ears; if he attempts to make a noise about the matter, he will be requested to hold his tongue. I could give a great many more instances, equally striking; but I refrain.

The Russian police has made more proselytes to the Greek church, than the missionaries and the popes. This explains why, at the present day, half of Russian Poland is converted. It was a question of life and death.

The Polish Archbishop of Smolensk, having nothing more to do in his diocese, which is almost entirely converted, has been summoned to St. Petersburg, where he now resides.

It has been said that, in matters of religion, there never were any great quarrels in Russia, and that its history did not offer the spectacle of those struggles which bathed in blood so many other countries of Europe.

Several causes have concurred to save Russia from religious troubles. In the first place, it never possessed the resources which printing offered in every other country, for the propagation of ideas and schisms. The circulation of books, whether manuscript or printed, is formally prohibited, and if any copyists were discovered they would be subjected to the most atrocious punishments, while any one daring to write upon the tenets of religion would be sentenced to death. On the other hand, the Russian government does not permit the publication of miracles and visions, except when they are advantageous to its own policy.

In spite of all this, however, no country contains within itself the germs of so many schisms. Europe never knew all the sects which have shown themselves in Russia, because immediately they threatened seriously to strike deep root, all the dissenting communities were transported in a lump to the banks of the Lena, in the remotest region of Siberia. Houses are razed, as well as heads shaved. This is what the Czar calls cutting off the evil at the root. With such means

of repression and conversion, the spiritual power, as the reader sees, never runs any risk of being shaken or worried.

Sects existed at a period long anterior to the reign of Peter I. Some of them arose under the patriarch Nicon, whom I mentioned a few pages back, and whose attempts at reform almost overthrew the empire, troubling it for a considerable time; while some sprang up after these dissensions, but all before Peter I. Being too numerous to be extirpated, they are tolerated; but they do not constitute regular bodies, nor have they public temples: they meet in private houses.

One of the most celebrated of these sects is that of the *Mutilaters*, the principal nucleus of which is disseminated in the environs of the city of Toula. A pretty large number of members reside, however, in some of the great cities of the empire.

This sect allows and practises mutilation. These Origenists of a new kind believe that they are performing a meritorious act by mutilating themselves. Catherine II. endeavoured to put down this fanaticism. After her, the Emperor Alexander adopted the most severe and energetic measures with the same object. He condemned these sectarians to be transported *en masse*, and there was some talk of isolating them on the most northern shores of Kamtschatka. They all prepared in silence to undergo their exile and even to become martyrs, when the Russian government, touched by a sentiment of pity for these thousands of madmen, renounced, of its own accord, carrying into effect the

measures with which it had threatened them, and shut its eyes. Orders were issued that they should be tolerated, provided they made no proselytes. The Emperor Nicholas causes all those who are convicted of having practised, or aided in practising, their peculiar kind of mutilation upon children or adults, to run the gauntlet and undergo the punishment of the knout. These sectarians follow only one calling, namely, that of money-changers. I can confidently affirm that all the money-changers of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Novgorod, Kief, Odessa, Kasan, and all the Russian towns through which I ever passed, are mutilated. It is easy to recognise them by their sad physiognomy, their pale, greenish complexion, their leaden eyes, devoid of all fire, their falsetto voice, and their withered and wrinkled skin.

## X.

There is another sect called *Martinists*. The members admire Swedenborg, Böhm, Ekarthausen, and other mystic writers, who pass in their eyes for so many holy prophets. These people collect magical, cabalistic, hieroglyphical, and all other books of a similar description, and, in a word, everything that relates to the occult sciences. They follow pretty closely the doctrines of the Swedish visionary, but, as they are not sufficiently numerous to be dangerous, the government does not trouble itself about them.

The most important sect, however, both by its

numbers, the purity of its morals, and the respect that is paid it, is that of the *Old Believers*, the followers of the orthodox faith, whom the Russians call *Starovierzi*.

They all belong to the class of tradesmen. The motives which caused them to separate from the Russian church, are not more reasonable than those which brought about the oriental schism. They look with horror upon the use of tobacco, and will only say, "Hallelujah" twice. It is a great piece of impiety to repeat the word three times. They use in the celebration of mass seven little rolls, of the form and size of a small bun, instead of five, marking them with an octagonal cross instead of a square one. They make the sign of the cross with the fore-finger and middle-finger alone, and they believe that a sure method of attaining happiness is to commit suicide for the love of God. There is one peculiarity of their faith, which is a very strange one in Russia: they look upon the autocratic government which rules them as an abomination, and property, of whatever description it may be, as a thing eminently anti-Christian. They profess doctrines, as we see, in perfect accordance with those of the French Communists.

They are more behind their age, and more ignorant, than any other class of Russians: but, for the sake of truth, I am bound to confess that they are remarkable for their strict probity, and for being more polished in their customs and more gentle in their manners than the majority of their fellow-citizens. They assert that the Russian priests are not fit to baptize, confess,

marry, or administer the sacrament, because they are incontinent, and get tipsy on wine and brandy.

## XI.

With the exception of some very trifling points in which it differs, the Russo-Greek is the same as the Latin church. Only the Russo-Greeks say that Rome is schismatic.

The subjects of disagreement, which served as a pretext for the separation of the two churches, are, however, sufficiently numerous. I will only mention four of them:—First, the Latin church made use of unleavened bread in the celebration of the sacred mysteries; second, the members of the Latin church eat cheese, eggs, milk-food, butter, and animal flesh during Lent; third, they fasted on Saturdays, which is essentially contrary to the commands of Holy Writ; and fourth, they did not chaunt the "Hallelujah" during Lent, and, in addition to this, would not recognise the primacy of the pope.

The fomentors of this deplorable schism, Photius first, and after him Michael Cerularius, availed themselves of these skilfully-combined pretexts, to render the patriarchs of Constantinople masters of the East. But, when the separation was once effected, the road was traced out; their successors followed it, and thus paved the way for the downfall of the Greek empire and the capture of Constantinople by Amurath and Mahomet II.



EXTERIOR OF A RUSSO-GREEK CHURCH—THE CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION AT MOSCOW.

Paganism, also, has numerous partisans in Russia, such as Fetichist idolators, the chamanes of the Kamtschadales, Parsees, and even whole tribes who adore nothing at all, and live like brutes.

All travellers agree in one remark, which is, that the savage tribes belonging to this vast empire, which consists almost entirely of savages, are those least addicted to robbery and libertinism. But, I repeat, all the various creeds are only tolerated on condition that those who profess them shall never attempt to make proselytes.

Except in the two capitals and some of the larger cities of the empire, the boyars reside in palaces, and the peasants in huts, while God is worshipped in barns. In the cities, the churches are tolerably monumental, although, as far as style is concerned, they are in very bad taste, and of the greatest irregularity of composition. All the schools of architecture are jumbled together, the Byzantine being awkwardly engrafted on the Mogul, the Persian, the Greek, the Roman, and sometimes even the Gothic. These edifices look like the patchwork productions of several centuries. Their style is tormented like the life of the people. In the interior, they contain nothing save a few pictures of *bogs*, covered with pearls and diamonds, to which the faithful make fresh additions every day. The precious stones which ornament some of the Madonnas are worth more than £40,000. The eye rests on nothing save naked walls, scarcely even white-washed. Organs are prohibited, as are likewise sculptures and religious

pictures: the church does not permit instrumental music.

All the churches produced by Russian genius have cupolas studded with stars upon an azure or green ground, and surmounted by a double Greek cross. Those which date from the introduction of foreigners into the country, have a high square tower.

## XII.

Religious ceremonies, in Russia, are stamped with a character of strange whimsicality, which is to be met with nowhere else. The ceremony of baptism, for instance, is very curious. I remember that the first time I was invited to witness it, I had the greatest difficulty in restraining myself from indulging in a Homeric fit of laughter.

In the case of poor people, it is performed in the church, both during winter and summer. As I said before, the priest never puts himself out of the way for anything; that is to say, he only does so, and adopts precautionary measures, for those who pay him. This accounts for the great number of children who die on leaving the church after they have been baptized. In the case of rich people, the ceremony takes place in the room of the child's father or mother, but neither the father nor the mother is present at the ceremony, both being represented by their relations and friends, and the godfather and godmother. A large silver basin, or, more frequently, a copper one with the plating worn

off, and full of tepid water, is placed in the middle of the apartment. The priest first blesses the water, and then, at his request, the godfather and godmother renounce, in the name of the little brat, the Devil and all his pomps and works, spitting by the side of the vessel containing the holy water, as if to drown Satan in their contempt. The new-born child is now placed upon the left arm of the godfather, whose left hand is already fully occupied in grasping a wax taper of the length and form of a rat's tail, while, with his right, he holds the left hand of the godmother. The priest catches hold of the two hands thus united, and, dragging the owners after them, makes them walk three times round the aforesaid basin, while the deacon bellows like a bull, and causes the window panes to rattle again by chaunting psalms in praise of the little creature who has just made his appearance in the world. When this is over, the priest takes the child, who is completely naked, and plunges him three times into the water. The ceremony ends with a copious libation of champagne, of which the father and the mother take their share. It is accounted a mark of exceeding good taste and exquisite politeness, for the mother to drink a mouthful out of the glass of each guest before presenting it to him.

The solemnisation of marriage affords another proof that all the religious ceremonies of the Russians have preserved some remains of Paganism. It is always preceded by a betrothal, which does not absolutely require the intervention of a priest, though, in the majority of cases, the young couple cause two rings,

which they interchange, to be blessed. From this moment, all rivals are put on one side, or voluntarily retire, and the betrothed persons are at liberty to see each other at any hour of the day, and to appear together at plays, balls, etc., without the least restraint. The period of betrothal lasts for a time agreed on by the two families—a few weeks or a few months. In the case of peasants, the boyar himself fixes its duration. Although the obligation of betrothal is not irrevocable, it has almost the force of a civil contract.

On the day appointed for the marriage, the future husband and wife are conducted to the church by their nearest relatives. The priest, richly apparelled, receives them at the entrance, and, preceded by the crucifix and New Testament, leads them to a small table—placed before the high altar—covered with very rich brocade cloth, on which are placed the pyx and two crowns shaped like a Byzantine cupola, and composed of bands of gold or silver gilt, soldered together and ornamented with enamelled representations of male and female saints. The priest asks the future bride and bridegroom whether they are related or connected even in the most distant manner, and on their answering in the negative, places a piece of wax candle in the hand of each, reciting, as he does so, a few words of prayer. He then pours into a gold or silver goblet some wine, which he blesses, and of which he drinks a part. The bridegroom swallows a goodly draught after him, and the bride drinks up nearly all the rest. The sacristan receives the cup in his turn, plunging into it

an eye of covetousness which finds nothing left to look at. After this libation, the crowns are placed on the heads of the bride and bridegroom; the priest makes them walk round the little table that serves as an altar, and afterwards blesses the spectators. This ends the ceremony.

On returning from church, the company dine. After dinner, the new-married couple, followed by their nearest relatives, and preceded by violins, pass into the ball-room, the doors of which are shut upon them. In a corner of the apartment is arranged a table, loaded with glasses and bottles of champagne. A servant in grand livery is stationed behind it, his mission being to fill two glasses at the same time. At a signal previously agreed on, the musicians play a ritornello, on which the bride and bridegroom go hand in hand, and open the door, letting in only a couple of guests at a time. Each of them receives from the hands of the married pair a glass of champagne, to which both bride and bridegroom have first put their lips. The same ritornello is again played, and the same ceremony repeated for all the guests in succession. The ball then commences with a full orchestra. At one o'clock in the morning, supper is served up; the guests again drink, and the bride retires into the nuptial chamber, followed by one or two of her friends.

The ceremony is exactly the same at the marriages of peasants, only that, instead of a piece of brocade, it is a coarse linen cloth which covers the table; instead of crowns of gold, the crowns are made of copper or

the bark of trees, and instead of wax candles, tallow ones are used, while for the wine hydromel is substituted.

On occasions of this description, the bride is dressed in a kind of long coat or dressing-gown, composed of very coarse cloth, and reaching half-way down her legs, a sort of dress which is met with in almost all the governments of the empire; she wears regular men's boots, and a head-dress consisting of a cotton handkerchief. There is not the slightest attempt at the picturesque in the arrangement of this handkerchief; the only ornament she has is a large bunch of artificial flowers, stuck, without elegance or taste, on one side of her head. As for the bridegroom, with the exception of his hat, he is dressed like his wife.

On leaving the church, the newly-married couple proceed to prostrate themselves before their *mother*, for such is the name given by the Russian peasants to the wife of their lord. They then kiss her hand, and receive in return from her a kiss upon the cheek or forehead; their friends imitate their example, and all in turn come and kiss the hand of the wife of their proprietor.

After the ceremony of the kisses, the men retire, and the women begin singing a plaintive monotonous song, giving a history of a virtuous wife, and likewise celebrating the praises of the nobleman and his family. During this time, two women detach themselves from the group and dance in the midst of the circle formed by it. Their dance is nought by a perpetual *avant-deux*. When the first dancers are tired out, two others replace them, and so on for several hours. There is



CEREMONY AFTER A PEASANT'S WEDDING.





some resemblance between this dance and that of the peasants of Britanny, in France.

After this they once more salute their lord and his wife, and then return to keep up their rejoicings in the dwelling of the bridegroom.

Easter is a national festival. It is the New Year's Day of the Russians, more particularly of the lower classes.

During the whole week, people visit and congratulate one another reciprocally. It is a universal custom throughout the country for persons to offer to and receive from one another, real eggs, painted all kinds of colours, or eggs made of gilt porcelain, or even gold; the presents being accompanied by three kisses on the mouth, and the words, *Christos voscrès*, ("Christ is risen"): the answer being, *Voistinoï voscrès* ("He is indeed risen").

On the Saturday night preceding Easter-Sunday, the churches are filled with a crowd of believers of all ages, and of all ranks. The men stand on one side of the church, and the women on the other, every one holding in his or her hand a small lighted wax-taper. Suddenly, as the clock peals forth midnight, the voice of the officiating priest pronounces the words, *Christos voscrès*, the strains of the Hallelujah resound through the building, and every one embraces the person next to him three times on the mouth, in memory of the Holy Trinity. Even the Emperor and Empress form no exception to this rule. On this pious and solemn occasion, there is no majesty recognised save that of the Almighty.

For several succeeding days, when two friends or acquaintances meet for the first time, they give each other the Easter kiss, or kiss of peace, without distinction of rank or sex. During the week, too, succeeding Easter-Sunday, every day, at the hour of changing guard, detachments from the different cadet-corps, and from all the regiments composing the garrison of St. Petersburg, proceed, in succession, to the square of the palace for the purpose of offering their felicitations to the Emperor and the Imperial family, and the Emperor, as well as the Grand-Duke, the heir to the throne, goes from rank to rank, and gives the kiss of peace to a certain number of the troops.

During the fortnight after Easter, every one repairs his strength, which a long and rigorous fast has previously reduced, by Pantagruelian feasts and entertainments, and repasts fitted for ogres, in which ham, butcher's meat, brandy, wine, and hydromel, are not spared. During these festivities, all the taverns echo with the most deafening cries, and the police has no time for anything save to pick up the revellers, who, in various stages of intoxication, are to be seen rolling about the streets.

As long as these festivities last, it may truly be asserted that all Russia is drunk and plunged in the most barbarous and most disgusting orgies. If you reproach a Russia with these excesses, he will reply with the greatest simplicity: "It is all very natural, for God Almighty does not rise every day."



THE CZAR GIVING THE KISS OF PEACE.

# THE NAVY.

## I.

The prodigious growth of Russia is not due to the workings of ambition merely, but also to those of necessity. Before the time of Peter I., Russia occupied a territory which was, without doubt, vast, but, in spite of this, very much confined. The empire wanted water, and was obliged, in order not to die of suffocation within its own boundaries, to run the risk of every possible sacrifice for the sake of acquiring, by conquest, a sea.

The country was intersected by broad and deep rivers, but the mouths of them were confiscated to the use of redoubtable neighbours.

The conquest of the German provinces of the Gulf of Finland, and, at a subsequent period, the annexation of Finland itself, rendered Russia mistress of the Baltic and opened to her the streams of the Niemen, the Dwina, the Narewa, and the Neva, while her occupation of the Crimea put her in possession of the whole extent of the Volga, the Don, the Dnieper, the Bug, and the Dniester. The Baltic offered her immense

advantages, on account of its proximity to the centre of Europe; but the Black Sea afforded her outlets and a prospect of political power which were far more important.

Immediately upon the acquisition of these two seas, St. Petersburg and Odessa were built, and became the two grand outlets by which Russia was enabled to spread its agricultural and natural produce all over Europe.

Arriving late at a state of civilisation, which they do not yet understand, but which they guess at, the Russians have no time to lose. They are concentrating, with a marvellous amount of energy and sagacity, on the points they have but just created, the strength and wealth of the empire, their immediate object being to annihilate all that surrounds them. In the Baltic, Riga, Veral Helsingfors, and Abo, are already sacrificed; while, in the Black Sea, Nicolaïf-Tagvarog, Kaffa-Akteas, and ten other cities, are in a state of rapid decay.

On the death of Peter the Great, the Russian navy was composed only of a few light vessels completely unseaworthy. His successors cared nothing about the navy, and it remained in the embryo state in which this great man had left it, until the time of Catherine II., who, however, did not do much more than her predecessors towards augmenting it.

The Emperor Nicholas is the only person who has pursued with superhuman energy his ancestor's project. The works for the construction of the forts,

ports, and harbours, which are, at present, sufficient to protect Russia from any sudden and successful attack by sea, are due to his genius and iron will. He may truly be called the founder of the Russian navy.

II.

At the present day, the Russian navy is formidable. It consists of three fleets :—

The Blue; the Red; and the White.

The first of these is stationed in the Black Sea, at Sebastopol; the second in the Baltic, at Cronstadt; and the third at Archangel. Besides these, there is a flotilla of small vessels, at Avatcha in Behring's Sea, at the extremity of Kamtschatka.

Each of the two first-mentioned fleets has two divisions, but the third has only one. Each division consists of two vessels of the first class, and six of the second, with six frigates, two corvettes, and several large steamers, whose number is not limited. I do not include in this list an infinite number of small craft, which could only be employed for the defence of the coast, if it happened to be attacked. The effective force of the crews of the Black Sea fleet is always kept up to its complement of twenty thousand men.

Were these different naval forces to be collected on one point, they would form, at the least, an enormous total of two hundred and forty vessels, carrying more than nine thousand guns, and more than eighty thousand men. If it were but possible to draft into this forest of

ships, skilful and experienced sailors, like those of England, France, or America, Russia, seconded by her millions of soldiers, would be mistress of the world.

In the present state of the Russian empire, the navy is incapable of action: it does not alarm us, it merely makes an impression on our imagination.

The truth is, that Russia wants the first, and indeed the only, vital element for a navy—seamen. The reason of this is simple enough: she possesses no merchant navy.

The population of Finland, Courland, Livonia, and Esthonia, does not amount to more than a million and a half of inhabitants. That of the Black Sea provinces does not exceed five hundred thousand. It is, therefore, only from this limited number, most of whom, too, devote themselves to agriculture, that Russia can raise her levies. Even those who are sailors are engaged in the coasting trade, which they follow in the day time alone, sheltering themselves at night behind the girdle of islands and eyots which line all the Russian coast.

To man its ships, the Russian government is obliged to fall back on the inhabitants of the interior of the country. In this way it has, up to the present time, formed an army of sailors, who are frightened at the sea, which the majority of them never saw before. The levies for the navy, like those for the army, are composed of the strangest and most heterogeneous elements; and it is, therefore, a very difficult task to prepare them for the rough calling for which they are intended.

Any man who has not, from his tenderest childhood, been familiar with scenes of sea-faring life, is unfitted for service in the navy. What use can possibly be made of a peasant dragged from his plough and native village, situated sometimes hundreds of leagues from the coast, and transported suddenly on board a man-of-war? Neither the whip nor the knout will ever be able to bend the rebellious and antipathetic nature of the Russian to this kind of service. The cold and fanatical indifference of the Russian soldier on land, before hundreds of cannons belching out death, abandons him entirely on board a ship.

The Russian, in his tastes, his disposition, his manners, and his indolence, is eminently Asiatic. Like the Arab and the Persian, the Cossack and the Tartar, he has a profound feeling of horror for the sea. Besides this, he is destitute of vigour, idle, and without muscular strength, for the muscles beneath his flabby skin, so often lacerated by the rod, are not capable of any great exertion. An Englishman or Frenchman is two or three times stronger and more active in his movements. A Russian ship, consequently, requires twice as many men as one of our vessels does, to make up its full complement.

Again, it is not on board a number of pontoons, imprisoned in the ice or laid up in dock for the greater part of the year, that sailors are formed or crews receive the practical instruction which it is necessary for them to acquire. Every year, the Baltic is blocked up by the ice from the month of October to the end of April, at least, and even the Black Sea is not always free from a

similar state of things, while, during the summer, the navigation of both seas is so dangerous and so difficult, that there is a ukase punishing with degradation and death every officer who has not returned with his vessel before the equinoxes, or who happens to lose it from stress of weather. In addition to all these considerations, good sailors are formed only by long voyages; and, I repeat, the Russians of the Black Sea, as well as those of the Baltic, are employed merely in the coasting trade.

III.

It is all to no purpose that Russia prides herself on her special schools; up to the present day, they have not produced anything very remarkable, or succeeded in forming a single naval officer. The young men who have been educated there have navigated the Neva for a few weeks only, and inspire no confidence. The Czar, who is always just and clear-sighted, has so plainly perceived the inaptitude of his people for maritime pursuits, that he has been under the necessity of confiding all the important posts to English and Swedish officers, whom he has induced to enter his service.

After everything that has been done, however, let Russia but suffer one reverse, let but her fleet in the Black Sea be burnt, and all is ended!

For his navy, as for his army, the Czar has made enormous sacrifices, far above his means. All the mines of the Oural mountains have never been able to make up the deficiency in the treasury. These sacrifices are

the cause of the insufficiency of salary which affects the entire public service, and engenders in it, as I have already said, the most odious and the most detestable venality.

On board the Russian men-of-war, the morals, the pay, and the punishments, are the same as in the barracks. On the one hand, we find there the same corruption and the same indifference for human life; and, on the other, the same wretched incapacity. Cronstadt, at the extremity of the Baltic, and Sebastopol, at the most southern point of the Crimea, are the only ports, the only maritime arsenals of Russia. They are both bristling with formidable works, which would defy all the fleets in the world. Archangel and Avatcha cannot be counted, for, during ten months and a half every year, they are either locked up in polar ice or buried beneath snow.

In addition to all these fleets, Russia possesses an incalculable number of vessels of all sizes, which, for want of sailors to man them, are rotting in the basins of the Neva or of the Black Sea, arranged with the regularity of a regiment of cavalry, and exactly in the same state as when they left the stocks. At Rostoff and Cronstadt nothing is to be seen but a forest of whitened trunks. Viewed from a certain distance, all these vessels resemble a vast assemblage of centenary firs, cut off symmetrically half-way up.

Russian ships are generally heavy, massive, and slow, but elegantly painted from the keel to the very top of the masts. Like the palaces of Moscow, there is

a luxury of cleanliness about their exterior which is quite indescribable.

Some of the vessels were built in America, and these it was that the Czar, a few years ago, caused to be paraded in all the ports of the Mediterranean, the German Ocean, and the Baltic. Even at the present day, naval architects in Russia, are either Englishmen or Americans. In 1838 or 1839, the Czar thought that he might throw off this foreign yoke, and accordingly confided to a Russian shipwright the task of building a vessel of colossal size, which was to be christened the *Russia*. The ceremony of launching took place with the greatest pomp. The constituted bodies of the state, the *corps diplomatique*, and all the foreigners who happened to be passing through St. Petersburg, were invited to be present. The signal for knocking away the shores was given. This giant of ships glided down the cradle and cleaved the waves; but, alas! it realised so little the hopes entertained of it, that it was found necessary to break it up and take it to pieces.

In no navy in Europe does a ship last for so short a time as in Russia; we never meet with a Russian ship that is more than seven, or at the most eight years, old. This is owing to the wood used in building, which is a kind of fir or soft oak, that the *teredo navalis*, a phosphorescent worm which infests the Black Sea, destroys very quickly. This, however, would not necessarily cause any inferiority on the part of Russia, if, before doing anything else, she had been able to create

a merchant navy; but in this case, as in everything else, she was in a hurry to enjoy, and began at the wrong end.

IV.

Before the conquest of the Crimea by the Russians in 1782, Sebastopol did not exist. On the site occupied by the city, which, at the present day, possesses a population of forty thousand souls, there was, seventy years ago, only a miserable village, the huts of which were scattered along the beach, and overlooked by a vast forest, since destroyed by the Russians. There is a scarcity of wood and water in the city, the aqueducts which conveyed the latter as far as Cherson, from a spring above the village, having been destroyed for the sake of the iron, lead, and stones, of which they were composed.

The heights which shelter the town from the south winds are covered with antique ruins that are fast disappearing every day. From the summit of the old Parthenian promontory, are still to be seen the ruins of a temple of Diana, the stones of which have served the inhabitants of the surrounding country to build their cabins with.

The gulf on which the town, the harbours, the arsenals, and all the naval establishments are situated, is about five miles long. The depth of water varies from ten to twelve fathoms. The mouth of the gulf is about a mile and a quarter broad, but the channel is extremely narrow, and defended by formidable works

and batteries. The only thing to be feared is the west wind. Several large natural basins, on the right of the bay, have been appropriated to various objects connected with the navy. The largest vessels can enter at full sail, and manœuvre in these basins. The arsenals and storehouses are cut out of the solid rock, and run no danger from fire. The east wind blows on the coast until noon, and the west wind the remainder of the day.

Sebastopol is certainly one of the finest, the most convenient, and the best-defended ports in the whole world.

Shut up in the limits of the Black Sea, which are now too narrow for her, Russia is making the most unheard-of efforts to advance beyond them. This vast sea is no longer sufficient for her desires; she covets the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. It is by this double canal that she wishes to find an outlet for her riches, and that she meditates, perhaps, the ruin and the pillage of the old world.

Proud of the share allotted to her at Navarino, she no longer dissimulates her views of ambition.

For a long time past, she has been preparing the way which is to lead her to Constantinople, that object of her most ardent longings. The destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino was planned, with consummate skill, by her state-craft, and France and England were her dupes. She cared but little about the independence of Greece; she saw and desired but one thing, and that was, the destruction of a rival navy.

# THE MAGISTRACY, JUSTICE, AND THE POLICE.

## I.

M. DE SEGUR was right when he said: "Russia, with the exception of the government, which has changed its place of residence, and the national costume, which was abolished by Peter I., has remained, in whatever light we view her, exactly what she was under the roughest of her reformers. Her morals are not improved, while her language, which ought to have assumed more literary forms, or become modified, her national spirit, and, in a word, everything else, have remained stationary."

As is the case with the religion of the country, the legislation is still the same to-day that it was a century and a half ago. The latter, especially, has resisted all the more or less serious attempts of contemporary Czars to remodel it.

Bacon has said, somewhere or other, that jurisprudence is the anchor of the law, just as the law is the anchor of the state. The anchor of the state in Russia is the Czar and the stick.

To govern such a people, sanguinary and atrocious

laws were necessary; laws which enforced punishments that would carry fear into the mind and inmost soul of every one, and strike with terror both great and small.

The morals of the country remaining the same, there was no necessity for modifying the laws, which are now exactly what they were when first decreed by Ivan, Basil, and Alexis.

The present code, which was laboriously knocked together towards the end of the reign of Alexander, and the commencement of that of the present Czar, contains merely old ukases drawn up in a modern style. It abrogates nothing, so that Russian justice can, according to the degree of elasticity of the judges' consciences, always refer to two different laws, and, if it chooses, select that which awards the severer punishment.

How many laws does the reader suppose have been found necessary to govern this nation? The autocrats who have reigned, for two centuries and a half, over these swamps and forests, have left behind them upwards of forty thousand laws, neither more nor less. Each ukase constitutes a separate law, and ukases are manufactured on every occasion. The Emperor Paul issued certain ones forbidding his subjects to wear round hats, of the same form as that worn in his time by an Englishman at St. Petersburg, which irritated his nervous system. He also issued one against the waistcoats denominated *à la Robespierre*, and I know not how many more, for similar reasons.

These forty thousand laws are divided into more than two thousand chapters, containing innumerable separate articles, and subdivided into paragraphs and *nota-benes*, referring the reader to one another, each one being directly contrary to all the rest. They are contained in forty-five quarto volumes.

Jurisprudence is in Russia an unknown science, for who would dare to comment on or interpret the law? Among all civilised nations, the law stands above the sovereign, who is the first to set an example of respect and obedience to it; but, in this instance again, among the Russians, the Czar is the impersonification of everything. He is above the law; or rather, he is the law itself, the incarnate, living law. Ukases, decrees, decisions, judgments, sentences of death—in one word, everything emanates from his will. On his lips hangs everything, life as well as death. To him alone belongs the right of commenting on and interpreting the law, with the view of adapting it to the particular degree of severity with which he desires to punish any one. According to the necessity of the moment, according to his whim, his good or bad humour, his desire for vengeance, his rage, or his feeling of equity, he rectifies, modifies, confirms or quashes the judgments delivered in his courts of justice.

The Emperor is above everything—the Emperor sways everything. When the reigning prince happens to be an honest, humane, and just man, the evil loses half its horrors, for if he is powerless in restraining venality, he does not, at least, authorise it. But when

the sovereign authority falls into the hands of a sanguinary monster like Ivan the Terrible, or of a madman like Paul I., the consequences may easily be conceived.

As we see, there is no want of laws for the proper administration of justice in Russia. What is wanting for the men who are charged with administering it, is honour, conscience, integrity, religion, disinterestedness, and, in a word, all the virtues necessary for a judge to possess. In the hands of the senators of the tchinn and of the feudal nobility, the law, instead of being what it ought to be, the natural protector of the interest of all men, is, on the contrary, a fearful weapon employed, as every one well knows, to menace the lives, the fortunes, the honour, and the security of families. The Russians have more to fear from the venality of the magistracy than from the despotism of the Czar, even if he be attacked with furious madness or sanguinary monomania, like Paul I.

I have already said that the origin of the incurable venality, which at present affects this great social body, is the uncertainty of office and the niggardly amount of the salaries: no one is paid. The judges traffic, therefore, as a matter of course, in justice: bribery is not regarded as a crime, for every one lives by it, and practises it as a right. The judges themselves settle what they are to be paid for the causes they have judged, and the loser pays without any disturbance, just as he would pay the expenses of a copy of a writ.

Whoever is rich and powerful can turn the balance of a trial in his own favour, either by bidding more than his adversary, or by having recourse to threats.

Gold is the pivot on which everything turns. With gold the judges are easily suborned. The Czar Nicholas groans under this disgraceful state of things, and has often visited with fearful punishments, such as degradation and transportation to Siberia, those men who were notorious for receiving bribes; but what has been the result? The evil is one which is so deeply rooted, that these instances of punishment have not deterred a single person from being guilty of the same venality.

II.

Whoever wants justice must pay for it: this is an elementary principle in Russia. As a natural consequence, no Russian, at least as far as I know, ever thinks of invoking any of the enactments contained in the forty-five volumes of laws.

Let not the reader imagine that the courts are always presided over by men of acknowledged attainments. Matters remain, at the present day, in the same state in which they were two centuries ago, when the Czars used to go down into the street, and judge, condemn, and execute their sentences themselves, with a blood-stained sabre in their hand.

The officials of justice, such as correspond to our ushers of the court, barristers, attorneys, and advocates, display the most monstrous avidity. When a

man is sunk in debauchery, ruined, and everywhere shunned, he turns barrister, that being the profession of those who have none. The character of a barrister is not, as with us, that of an honourable and educated man, well versed in the study of the laws and the art of elocution, who takes a pride in employing his talents for the defence of the widow, and the protection of the orphan; he neither interprets the law, nor explains the pleadings. All his science consists in knowing how to render obscure the simplest and the clearest subjects, and to make the art of chicanery as profitable as possible. It is not his business to defend the interests of his clients, but to come to an understanding with the barrister of the opposite party, in order that they may both live upon the cause confided to them. As may easily be imagined, the defence is not an oral one; everything is done by means of memorials upon stamped paper, the importance of which varies in proportion to that of the deeds themselves. The easier the circumstances of the pleaders, the longer will be the pleadings. The suits are interminable, and last as long as it pleases the judges and the barristers; if the suitors desire to see the end of them, they must pay for so doing in hard cash. The average duration of a simple trial in Russia is from ten to fifteen years; rarely less, and sometimes even twenty or thirty.

Justice is prompt only when called upon to condemn a man to suffer the punishment of the knout, to be whipt, or to be hanged, because such cases as these do not bring in any fees.

Can the reader guess how, for the most part, in the interior of the country, it is the fashion to cut through the knot of difficulties which may arise between relations who fall out about the office of guardian, whose duty it would be to administer the property of an orphan? Why, by causing the child to disappear by means of the *cholera*. I have had the proofs of a hundred such cases in my hands.

Justice has several different systems of weights and measures: she is vigilant, deaf, or troublesome, according as a person is more or less important by reason of the position he occupies in the aristocratic world, by his rank, his titles, or his fortune.

The boyars have the privilege of residing in the house of a merchant or tradesman, without the latter being able to oblige them to pay rent, to turn them out, or to seize their furniture. This privilege extends likewise to all those who serve the crown. Both they and their goods are inviolable and sacred. Even at the present day, if any one desires to put an end to this abuse of brute force, he has no remedy but to apply to the Emperor, who takes care, however, that justice is immediately done.

But if the law is a dead letter for the pompous boyars, and, as a general rule, for all who serve the state, it makes up for this by its roughness and intractability whenever a foreigner has to be made to pay. In such cases, the police and the magistrates employ the most violent and most outrageous measures; the power of personal arrest, for instance, is left entirely

to the option of the *natziratell*, who, without any form of trial, throws the debtor into prison, and does not deign to enter into any explanation until afterwards. Nowhere else does the police execute its duty so odiously and rigorously, and nowhere does it fleece a foreigner with such audacity and impudence. If a foreigner happens to be guilty of a slight infringement of the law,—such, for instance, as smoking inadvertently the end of a cigar in the street,—he is pursued by a series of outrages for a period of several weeks.

III.

The laws are less to be feared than the police, which inspires such terror that every one shrinks, as he would from a pestilence, from receiving or assisting anybody who is wounded, ill, or struck with apoplexy. The dying person, whose head is resting on the threshold of a barber's or apothecary's shop, may require only to be bled or to have a glass of water given him in order to be saved, but the barber, who can bleed him, and the apothecary, who can staunch his blood, barricade themselves in their houses. All the people in the neighbourhood shut their doors; the place around the dying wretch is deserted, as if he were infected with the plague, and the surgeons take to flight. No one dares to run for help or to assist the unhappy being who is lying in the agonies of death; the law expressly prohibits such a thing before the agents of justice have come and drawn up an official report of the accident.

Your neighbour is assassinated before your eyes, he is dying, and cries out for help; a horse runs away, dragging along his rider, whose foot is caught in the stirrup; what does that matter? fly from the spot as quickly as you can; let the horse pass by you in his mad career! Your friend, or your own father, is drowning at two paces' distance from where you stand; he calls on you, he implores you to assist him, for the current is on the point of carrying him away, and swallowing him up for ever; you stretch out your walking-stick, your umbrella, or whatever you may happen to have in your hand, and save him; this is a heavy misfortune for you. Henceforward you belong to the police-agents and the courts of justice; you will be exposed to every kind of vexation and moral torture; you will be accommodated with a lodging in a state prison, which is carpeted with a thick covering of moss and toadstools, and tenanted by insects of all descriptions. Here you will be allowed to rot until such time as the authorities are fully convinced, and until it is most clearly proved, according to the judicial forms observed in the country, that it was really from a feeling of humanity that you assisted and saved a fellow-creature from imminent danger; the said judicial forms consisting in a method of causing your purse to pass from your own pocket into that of the police-agents. The better that purse is lined, the more easily will all the difficulties of the case be overcome.

People are forbidden to be humane as they are forbidden to talk politics. Whoever puts into practice

the principles of humanity is subjected to every species of vexatious treatment, and sees the gates of Siberia looming for him in the distance. In order to live in the midst of this population, a man must place his soul, his heart, and all his noble sentiments, on a level with it. As soon as he sets his foot upon Russian soil, he must become another being, and leave at the frontier all his individuality; generosity, charity, and frankness, are a kind of coin which is not current in the country, and which will prove a source of numberless tribulations, such as are to be met with there alone. Close your purse, as you would steel your heart, against misery, in whatever form it presents itself; take care of being generous, or you will be taken for a propagandist; do not offer your assistance if a house is being burnt down before your eyes; do not protect any one's life, for you would be taken for a robber or a rebel; allow even the Emperor himself to be drowned, for his person is as inviolable and as sacred as an Indian idol. The only method to save yourself from thirty million different annoyances is to be, and always to remain, indifferent to everything.

I was under the necessity of conforming—not, however, without one or two mishaps—to this barbarous code of manners, in order never to err, or, at least, to err as slightly as possible, against the customs of the country.

But what can be the object, my readers will ask, of these savage laws, which prohibit a man from affording assistance to any one in want of it. The Russians

who are best informed about the matter, frankly avow that the lower classes are generally impudent, sharp-fingered, and thievishly inclined, and that, under pretence of assisting their fellow-creature, they would, much more probably, lighten him of the contents of his pocket and his fob, or even strip him of everything he possessed. This is the true motive, and I do not seek for any other, as it perfectly agrees with my own observations. As a natural consequence, the race of *badauds* is unknown in Russia.

IV.

I have said that the law protects nothing. However monstrous this assertion may appear, it is strictly true, and I maintain it. The law would afford protection if it were administered by honest hands, but the falseness of its representatives is so notorious as to have passed into a proverb in the Russian language. Alluding to the exploits of the brigand Cartouche, we say in France, "A person might fancy himself in the Forest of Bondy;" but in Russia they say, "A person might fancy himself in the hands of a *nadziratell*."

When taking off or affixing the seals, the nadziratell fraudulently appropriates those objects in the inventory or inheritance which can most conveniently be carried off; he lays his hands upon everything within his reach; no matter what it may be, whether money, jewelry, plate, or title deeds of annuities, he seizes on it with the greatest effrontery, if you unluckily take your eyes off him for a single instant. It is of no use

to prefer a complaint against him, for he will neutralise it by purchasing the silence of his superior. Cases of this description are brought every day before the magistrates, who hush them up, and not only refuse to punish the offender, but will not even oblige him to restore what he has stolen.

These nadziratells, or commissaries of police, are organised in all the cities pretty much as they are in France; only they are formed into regular regiments, and dressed in a military costume something like that of the French *Sergents de Ville*, with a three-cornered cap, and a sword at their side. The pay which they receive from the state is very insignificant, amounting to twenty or twenty-four pounds a-year at the most. Their sumptuous mode of living, and the magnificent display they make, are mysteries to the Russians themselves. They have carriages, horses, servants, and boxes at the theatres; they are married, have families, and keep preceptors for their children, while the only resources they are known to possess is the pay which I have mentioned. Had they inherited anything from their parents, they would evidently have chosen some other calling. What, then, are the sources from which every one of them procures the sums necessary for keeping up his establishment? It is a sad thing to say, but these sources consist in robbery, in rapine, in swindling of every description, and in the most barefaced system of bribery,—always practised, by the way, against those who possess neither influence nor social position, and particularly against foreigners.

For instance, your watch or your pelisse has been stolen. The fact of the robbery reaches the ear of the commissary of police, who immediately hastens to your house. In his capacity of an agent of the law, it is his duty to take measures for your security. He receives from you the description of the stolen article, draws up an official report, insolently demands six or seven shillings as the price of what he has scribbled down, and withdraws, promising you by all the saints of Paradise that the thief shall be arrested and punished, and that whatever you have lost shall be found; but he does not say that it shall be restored to you. The next day, in fact, he re-appears, accompanied by an *alguazil*, who has got in his pocket, or on his shoulder, a number of objects, which are shown to you as having been found upon the person of the thief, but which you, of course, do not recognise, because they are not those which have been stolen from you. Another official report is drawn up to register this little incident, and you expend six or seven shillings more, to which you add *something for luck* for the alguazil, and think yourself fortunate, if, for these twelve or fourteen shillings, you regain the object whose loss you regret.

He repeats this little game a third, a fourth, and a fifth time, presenting to you, on each occasion, various objects which he very well knows are not those that you have described. He fleeces you in this manner, until, completely undeceived in your mistaken notions of the worthy official's probity, you turn him out of doors, together with his gaoler, and the watch and old

coat, which will serve to make other dupes. A circumstance of this very kind, of which I myself was the victim, and which occurred about an old pelisse that was stolen from me at the theatre, is in itself a perfect summary of the hundred and one other methods of swindling, by means of which these men extort money from foreigners, and frequently from Russians themselves.

Some years ago, Count Benkendorff was summoned to the Emperor Nicholas, to receive a sum of £1,200 destined for works of charity. The Count afterwards returned to his own house, went into his study, where he stayed several hours, and then ordered his carriage. At the moment he was preparing to enter it, the minister perceived that he had not got his pocket-book; he ran precipitately up-stairs again, ransacked his study and all the furniture in it, but found nothing. Had he lost the £1,200, he thought, or had they been stolen? General Kakoschkinn, the prefect of police, was immediately sent for, and commanded to find the thief and the pocket-book by the next morning. The next morning, at the appointed hour, the prefect of police entered the minister's study, and handed the minister the £1,200, which, he said, had been found on the person of the thief. As for the pocket-book and papers, they had been thrown, doubtless, into the Neva, because the criminal thought they might compromise him. Count Benkendorff took the £1,200, but, in thrusting his hand into his pocket, found, wonderful to say! the pocket-book, which he thought he had lost, and in the pocket-book the money, intact, and just

as it had been given him the day previous by the Emperor.

The fact of the matter was simply this: General Kakoschkinn, giving up in despair all idea of laying his hand upon the sum which had either been lost or stolen, thought it would be far more expeditious to summon all his nadziratells, and make them pay down the £1,200, which he had presented to the minister.

## V.

A man in Russia is looked upon as such an insignificant object, that no notice is ever taken of the absence or disappearance of any one. It is even prohibited to speak of these kinds of things, and the police never institutes any search after the missing individual. Even his family, unless it is very influential, does not dare to adopt any measures for finding him: it prefers trusting to Providence. Suppose, for instance, that the police, in obedience to superior orders, had conducted the absent person to Siberia? You would be looked upon as very curious if you endeavoured to find out whether this was the case. In all instances of doubt, it is your duty to abstain from inquiry. Besides, the police has something far more important to do, than to waste its time in finding persons who are dead or missing!

A corpse floats along upon the water, coming no one knows whence. In the course of eight, ten, or perhaps fifteen days, a thousand different people have seen it, but not one has ever thought of taking it up,

giving it Christian burial, and seeking out its family. Drifted by the wind, it has beaten against the sand of the beach for days together, but every one has fled from it, making the sign of the cross three times. It is stopped by the bushes, the reeds, and the shrubs, which line the banks, and either rots away, or is devoured by animals, without a single person troubling his head about it. If, as is sometimes the case, the agents of police deign to take any notice of it, they come down to where it lies, not to identify it, but to strip it of whatever it may happen to have, and then to throw it, like a dead dog, into a hole hastily dug on the shore, or in the forest, without the least ceremony, or the slightest attempt at discovering the cause of death.

The circumstance of individuals disappearing is one of frequent occurrence. Are such cases to be attributed to the mysterious justice of the Czar, or to the vengeance of those possessed of power? No one can say. A man is assassinated, and his corpse is carried a few paces out of the city into the immense marshy forests which surround it, and into which no one ever dares to venture, or else it is thrown into the water, and there the matter ends. The authors of the crime are never tracked out and punished.

There is only one thing about which the police interests itself particularly: and that is, to find out what takes place in the bosom of every family, what is said there, what is done there, and what is thought there. It busies itself more about the thoughts of each separate individual than about the security of the whole

community. This body pricks up its ears to listen everywhere; and in every place in which three persons come together, as the Russians themselves say, there are two spies. It is by this system of terror that the Czar governs his people in peace. Such is the exactitude of the accounts forwarded to him, that, one day, he sent one of his aides-de-camp to a lady of the court, to caution her not to receive her lover, for the future, in her bed-chamber at night, before her husband was asleep. The husband was rather brutal in his disposition, and would certainly have made a disturbance had he discovered his conjugal misfortune. His Majesty allows the greatest license, provided no scandal is occasioned thereby.

Divorce is permitted in Russia by the civil law, and the dogmas of the Greek church recognise and sanction it. But people rarely have recourse to it, and generally only in the event of sterility, or when the husband or wife is suffering from disease. The holy synod alone is called upon to judge the merits of the cause alleged, and alone has the power of annulling ill-assorted marriages. As, however, corruption is a powerful lever in all the courts of law, the person who stands best with the judges of the cause, either from family influence or fortune, causes the sentence to be pronounced in his or her favour.

Truth, however, compels me to state that applications for divorce or separation are extremely rare, less on account of the ease with which persons can obtain them, than from the inutility of such measures, when

every one can enjoy so complete a state of independence in married life.

The wife receives her lovers without disguise; the husband receives his mistress without constraint or dissension; and everything goes on quietly, without a single reproach to trouble the peace of either party.

A woman who is a widow for the third time, can only take as fourth husband a Jew, whom she has converted to the Greek religion. If she becomes a widow for the fourth time, she is not permitted to marry a fifth time; the same holds good for men. There are no laws against rape, and it could not be otherwise in a country where women are considered as of so little importance.

VI.

The Russians are acquainted with every species of torture and punishment. Impalement was practised as late as the reign of Peter I. Elizabeth abolished the punishment of death, but she herself soon infringed the law to gratify her little projects of revenge. The waters of the Neva remain, however, and those whom the government does not dare to strangle it drowns! Criminals are not often sent to prison, for a prison is looked upon as a place where crime, idleness, and drunkenness, thrive most successfully. Besides, a Russian, who is naturally indolent and destitute of all activity, does not regard imprisonment as a punishment, as he is boarded and lodged, sleeps undisturbed, and does nothing. He is merely deprived of liberty,

and that is a thing which he never knew. What matters to him a little more or a little less space to move about in! Imprisonment, consequently, produces no salutary effect on him. The bastinado, therefore, was invented to supply its place. This is the most usual kind of punishment. The slightest offences are punished with the stick, to which every one is subject, both moujicks and nobles, with this difference, however, that the former are beaten publicly, in the face of day, while the latter are chastised in private, despite of the law which should protect them.

The celebrated poet, Pouschkinn, a few days before being killed in a duel, was whipped in the rooms of the prefect of police, by the command of the Czar, in order, as he was told, to soften down the ardour of his caustic humour. Not a week, not a day passes, without some officers, some students, or some officials, suffering the same kind of punishment, with their trousers down and their shoulders bare, for the least intemperance of language; but always in the most rigorously private manner. If the moujicks, or, in a word, the people, were to learn that boyars and priests tingled beneath the blows of the stick as well as themselves, what would be the effect produced?

The law contains no statutes against offences of the press, and for the very simple reason, that there is no press in the country. All the gazettes published, of whatever nature they may be, literary or scientific, agricultural or medical, are edited under the eyes of the Emperor or his censors. Woe to those officials

who happen to let pass a line or an expression contrary to the grand and sacred principles which govern the country, for they themselves would be pitilessly whipped as well as the authors and printers.

The members of this degraded population, deprived of all natural sentiment by a system of the most frightful despotism, suffer, every day, all kinds of outrages without a murmur. Have they committed any offence against the regulations of the police? They buy its silence with their hard-earned gold. Are they involved in any trial? they know that justice is knocked down to the highest bidder, and take their measures accordingly.

Persons are prohibited from making any complaint directly to the Czar. They must write to him *franco* through the post. The secretaries charged with opening these petitions suppress the greater number of them, only laying before the Emperor those which it would be dangerous to conceal. I saw upon the coast of Africa, in the interior of Guinea, at the court of the Negro king Domahé, a savage monarch, almost a cannibal, who set out several times in the course of the year, to travel through the provinces of his kingdom, in order to facilitate the free access of his people to him, to suppress all abuses of those in authority, and, in this manner, to put a curb upon the arbitrary conduct of his officers. But in Russia, on the confines of civilisation itself, the Czar travels for his own amusement merely, and in nowise to enter into communication with his people. He allows only his nobles to ap-

proach him; the people are repelled, and forbidden even to speak to the Autocrat, under penalty of the rattan, in wielding which, Russian justice cannot be accused of remissness or negligence.

Among the savages of whom I have just spoken, the head of the state is subject to the influence of public opinion, and governs his people with paternal affection; he knows how to cause his own prerogative to be respected, in the same way that he himself respects, and causes to be respected, the rights, the property, and the lives of his people. But, in Russia, the whole law might be summed up as the employment of brute force alone. The acts of the Czar himself are subject to no control, his authority is restricted by nothing, while the authority of his boyars over the serfs is unlimited, and extends even over life itself.

Arbitrariness pervades everything. It is true that laws exist, but they are not immutable, and above them is a class of men, who act in perfect unison with one another, and who never respect the laws. These persons do not even take the trouble to elude or bend them with common decency. The courts pursue a course of legal violence, if I may so express myself.

Do not require or seek any guarantee either for your person or your property, for you would never obtain it, not even the most simple kind of guarantee which the most savage nations voluntarily respect, namely, that of property, or that of a man's right to his free judgment. You have not even the right of chang-

ing your residence, or moving out of one house into another, without permission.

The first tribunal is that of the police. It is there that causes are first examined, and afterwards judged by a regular tribunal of inferior jurisdiction; lastly, they are taken before a court of appeal, if the appellants can succeed in getting so far. The prosecution lasts a long time, the accused person being kept in prison for several years before sentence is pronounced. If, on the most indisputable evidence, he is acknowledged to be innocent, and set at liberty, it is not before he has passed three or four years upon the straw of a dungeon, in the midst of the most disgusting filth, while waiting for justice to be done him. The courts of law take plenty of time to become acquainted with the merits of obscure cases. I have often been informed that the Emperor, swayed by the liveliest feelings of equity, never allowed any judgment to be enforced until he had previously examined it himself. With every inclination to believe in his ardent desire to act properly, I am at a loss to understand how he can, in addition to his laborious occupations connected with government, find leisure to examine some hundreds of thousands of cases. We must not forget, either, that before approving or disapproving, he must consider, with regard to the judgment submitted to him, the manners of the people to whom the person judged belongs, and, in this vast empire, there are forty different races, having no affinity with each other, either by their language, their occupations, their manners, or their trade.

The Russian gazettes never report any crime; and yet crimes of all descriptions—murders, fires, scenes of pillage, and instances of atrocious vengeance—are of frequent occurrence.

Imprisonment for debt lasts five years, but here again Russian law proves itself to be a cheat and a lie. Every person who serves the state is inviolable and sacred, as are also his moveables and real property; this holds good from the porter of a ministerial office, a school of cadets, or a public institute, and from the sexton of a church, up to the minister, the general, or the bishop. On the other hand, however, a foreigner, or a Russian to whom money is owing, can oppose the granting of a passport to his debtor, if the latter contemplates making a journey out of the country.

The forty-five volumes of Russian laws which I have mentioned, may in fact be summed up in a few lines, or even a few words: arbitrariness, legal violence, denial of justice, and passive obedience.

## THE FINANCES.

I.

Previous to 1789, Russia had, so to speak, no debt. Her annual receipts did not, it is true, amount to eight millions, but this was sufficient, not only for the expenses of the state, but also for the prodigality of the Czarinas, and the eccentric and ruinous whims of their favourites.

The struggles in which the empire was obliged to engage to defend Prussia and Austria, and afterwards those in which she was involved on her own territory, against the armies of Napoleon, as well as the recent ones, when Poland rose up in insurrection, obliged her to issue an enormous quantity of paper money. This she has in vain attempted to supersede by means of loans effected in Holland, and subsequently repeated in other countries.

In spite of the subsidies granted her, at one time, by England, to turn her arms against France, in spite of the enormous contributions she levied by her troops on Turkey and Persia, and likewise on the conquered Poles, her financial condition has not changed; now,

as heretofore, she is incapable of increasing her receipts in a manner proportionate to the prodigious and daily increase of her liabilities.

However, without hoping, perhaps, ever to see her expenses and receipts equally balanced, she might, at least, see her finances in a much more prosperous condition, if the officials appointed to receive the moneys due to the state did not, with impunity, and in the most audacious manner, practise every kind of fraud, and appropriate for their own benefit a large portion of the receipts. Their audacity is so great, that, under the very eyes of the Czar himself, the officers of the customs sell their silence to any one who will pay them for it, in order to carry on smuggling in perfect security.

We find among the officials of the administration of the empire all the abuses peculiar to the worst organised governments, besides a great many others which belong exclusively to Russia.

The sources of the budget are not numerous. The most obvious ones are those derived from the customs, the salt monopoly, the mines, the imports, the poll-tax, and from farming the sale of the brandy with which government poisons and brutalises the entire population. There are, also, the taxes on the passports of the Russians themselves, which cost an enormous sum; those on the permits of residence, which subject all foreigners who reside or merely travel in Russia, to an odious and vexatious system of contribution, amounting to more than £1, 14*s.* a-year; also the dues for registering, and

stamps. These last two sources are not very fruitful, as they depend entirely on transactions of the nobility, the merchants, and the freemen, who are not at all numerous in the empire. Lastly, there are the taxes on the guilds and various patents, the amount being proportioned to the capital which the tradesmen or merchants declare that they employ in their business.

In order to obtain a total of from twenty-four to thirty-two million pounds sterling, at which we may estimate the revenues of Russia, it required all the financial genius of Count de Cancrine, a Saxon subject, summoned to St. Petersburg by the Czar Alexander, to set in order this portion of the administration.

II.

It is a difficult thing to understand how, with such slender resources, the government can meet the charges of so vast an empire, which keeps up a permanent army of more than a million of men, as well as provide for the necessities and caprices of a most magnificent and most numerous court, and for the expenses of all the branches of a colossal administration. The question naturally presents itself, where would the Czar obtain money when he finds himself engaged in a really serious war?

Would he obtain it from the peasants? They are already bowed down by the poll-tax, the abrocks, and the tyranny of all kinds practised on them by the boyars

and their agents. Besides, enervated by slavery, as much as by their habitual indolence, they only seek to raise from the soil what is strictly necessary for their existence.

Would he obtain it by doubling the land-tax? The taxes cannot be made to produce more than they do. Besides, on what could they be raised? On an ungrateful soil which produces scarcely anything. The Russian soil is nothing but an immense forest, intersected by swamps, and lakes as large as seas, and by steppes which are equal in size to deserts, where the land that is in cultivation, or capable of cultivation, is merely an accident. It is almost impossible to turn any of the forests to account, for the same reason that renders the labour of the peasant unproductive; there are neither roads nor highways. The outer covering of mould, too, is so thin and poor, that trees cannot flourish in it; on attaining an average age of fifteen years, they become stunted, shrivel up, and rot away. In four-fifths of the whole extent of the empire, the corn does not yield more than six or eight grains to the seed.

Would he obtain it from those in trade? They possess only houses, and capital which can in no way be got at. This class of men is not at all numerous, and hardly counts at all in the state. Possessing no kind of influence, it is molested and preyed upon according to the good will of the nobility, and the agents of all the branches of the imperial administration.

Would he obtain it from the nobility? This body

consists of, at the very most, a million individuals, nine-tenths of whom, and more, are eaten up by debts, and whose property is mortgaged in the banks of the empire, while the other tenth is disputing for the best-paid places at court. To impose upon these ruined nobles a fresh tax, would evidently be simply causing it to fall upon the peasants; and were the latter taxed beyond their capabilities, there would be every reason to fear a general revolt.

Would he obtain it from the secular clergy? They are exempt from poll-tax and imposts, and are as poor as the illustrious Idumæan patriarch himself.

Could he increase the custom duties? They are already exorbitant, and equivalent to a continental blockade in disguise. The duty on the majority of articles imported, amounts to more than eighty or ninety per cent. on their value. Badly distributed, badly combined, and always exacted in the most vexatious manner, in order to compel the merchants to be generous, the duties repel rather than attract foreign trade. It may be supposed that this prohibitory system has powerfully conduced to assist the development of the national industry, but such is in nowise the case.

Up to the present time, the national industry has made but little progress; it has never produced, for the consumption of the country, aught but clumsy and imperfect piracies of foreign manufactures, although the Russian government keeps in London and Paris a number of agents charged with copying all the best

articles of French and English manufacture, and sending them to St. Petersburg and Moscow, which have become, as far as several branches of trade are concerned, exactly what Brussels is for French books. The Russians unscrupulously appropriate, likewise, all patented inventions, without the least respect for the property of others.

Both internal and foreign commerce is carried on by foreign capitalists, who are easily alarmed. Take away, or frighten, the English, French, Dutch, and German firms of Cronstadt, Odessa, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, and the vast machine of government is suddenly paralysed, and all Russia starving.

An empire can never possess any material power, except in perfect proportion to its own financial resources, and the Czar only possesses such as are very precarious and very uncertain, and which the slightest perturbation in Europe would gravely compromise. He has but very little ready money in his empire, so that he would be deprived of the resource which the Sultans used formerly to adopt in their distress, namely, the debasing of the coin. He could not have recourse to fresh foreign loans ; and the empire, already encumbered with paper-money, would not support the issue of any more, seeing that the Czar has already been obliged actually to compel his wealthiest provinces to accept this kind of currency, which they rejected, and which they still reject even at the present day.

The Russians believe that there are hundreds of

millions of pounds sterling heaped up in the cellars of the citadel. This fact appears to me quite beyond the limits of probability. I cannot understand from what sources, and to what end, the Czar Nicholas could ever have accumulated such an amount of treasure.

# SLAVERY.

## I.

The condition of the slave is still, at the present day, what it was under Peter I. In spite of the strenuous efforts of the Emperor Nicholas to render the condition of the peasant more happy, and more supportable, it has remained pretty much the same that it always was.

The inhabitants and the soil are enfeoffed to about sixty thousand noble families, the head of each of which represents a nomade Tartar, encamped provisionally in the midst of his serfs, and cultivating the land until the moment that the Czar shall call upon him to take up arms. The Russians have an idea that they will one day subjugate the world, and that the Sclavonic race is destined to refresh, with its vigorous blood, the degenerated races of the south.

In this state of encampment, however, which has lasted more than a century, the serf has gradually lost his primitive character, his energy, his physical strength, and that taste for an adventurous life generally inherent in nomade races. Accustomed, by his continual intercourse with those who compose the establishment of his lord, to certain sweets of home, he gradually

acquires a liking for the domestic hearth, and thinks more of the cabin which shelters him than the conquests which he is promised. Civilisation expires on the frontiers of his native country. If it ever happens that he should speak of liberty, it is as of an unknown thing whose meaning or utility he does not perceive. He understands nothing of the primitive equality of men, or of the odious division of castes.

Cruelly disciplined under a state of atrocious servitude, he is indifferent to all around him. The agent of his lord may rob him, or his lord himself may carry off his daughter to satisfy his brutal lust, and he will thank him for the honour which he has done his family.

In all other parts of Europe, there are, between the aristocracy and the people, an infinite number of intermediate classes, by means of which one of the lower classes may rise, according to his desire, his caprice, or his interest, from his original station to a more elevated one; we find nothing similar to this in Russia. The peasant cannot follow any manual calling, he cannot change his occupation, and from an agricultural labourer become a servant, without the consent of his lord; if the latter refuses it, the peasant has no appeal.

But the reader will say: In a Christian country it is the duty of the law to protect the interest, the life, the property, and the family of the peasant, as much as that of the noble. The law of Russia protects the interest of none, except indeed of those connected with the government. For the serf, *property* is something unknown; the word no more exists in his language,

than the words *citizen* or *liberty* exist in the Russian dictionary.

The most the law does is to protect the life and the property of the boyars. The serf, being considered as a mere farming machine, does not require laws. A plough can very well be left out of doors all night, exposed to the snow, the rain, or the frost; and what is a serf in Russia save a walking plough?

The peasants are well aware from tradition, that there exists a something which is called the law, but that this something was created to be employed against them, and for the benefit of beings who do not resemble them. Do the horses of a regiment understand the laws of discipline? They are made to obey them by means of the whip and the spur, no more; and in Russia, as in the stables of cavalry barracks, the whip is the surest means of setting matters right.

For the serf there are no laws, no courts of justice, no regular mode of legal redress. For him the law is his lord; for him, the court of justice is also his lord; and the agent of the latter is, at the same time, his tipstaff and his executioner.

Religion, God, the Pope, and the laws, are personified in the Emperor, just as the noble and the Emperor are personified in a coarse, ignorant, and vindictive agent, always present, with a whip in one hand and a stick in the other, like a groom at the door of a stable; plying the whip on his right, and the stick on his left, and always keeping watch with brutal severity to see that no one oversteps the boundaries of his social

position, or makes any effort to escape from the harshness of the rules and regulations to which he is subjected.

Besides, as the serf never possessed either property or rights, it was useless for the law to enter into any long explanations on the subject.

The ukases are promulgated for the use and convenience of the nobles alone; the people, or rather the serfs, never know anything about them. Were the serfs acquainted with the law, they would interpret it in their own manner; they would begin to reason, and from discussion to enfranchisement there is but one step. The people, therefore, do not know, and must not know, that there is such a thing as right.

II.

Let us open one of the voluminous books of laws, and take the chapter regulating serfdom. My finger lights upon Article 948, of which the following is a most faithful translation: "Besides being required to yield passive obedience to their masters, slaves are obliged, under the severest penalties, to uncover themselves whenever they are in their presence, to succour them should they be attacked, or a fire break out in their houses, or if any attempt should be made upon the honour of their (the slaves') mistress."

The two following articles will give the reader a still better idea of the monstrous character of these laws:

"Article 949. Noblemen are prohibited from obliging their serfs, male or female, to marry contrary to their wishes, by selecting a husband for a female serf, or a wife for a male serf, if he or she has not chosen the person selected."

"Article 954. Priests are expressly forbidden to marry female serfs, or their daughters, to any person whatever, *without the permission* of the noblemen to whom they belong."

At Article 964, I read as follows: "A nobleman has the right of imposing on his serfs all kinds of work, and pecuniary, personal, and other fines. He has the right of making a serf change his condition as a servant for that of an agricultural labourer, or that of an agricultural labourer for that of a servant, or of putting him out to service at a stranger's.

"He judges all differences without appeal. To keep his slaves in a state of the most passive obedience, he has the right of employing all means of correction, and whatever unusual punishments he may judge necessary: he can even send them to Siberia, accompanied by their wives and children, under six years for the males and ten years for the females.

"He has the right of transporting the whole or part of his slaves from one estate to another, that is to say, from north to south, from east to west, and *vice versâ*."

But for a removal of this description, the nobleman is obliged to pay the Crown for a permit, just as if the slave were a cartload of wood which its owner might wish to transport through the city of Paris.

Article 988 says: "Slaves may be sold with or without the estate, and consequently be transported from one place to another, at the pleasure of the purchaser, but the sale can only take place between members of the feudal nobility."

As a matter of course, a person can sell or alienate a part or the whole of a village, either to pay a gambling debt, or for any other reason, just as a farmer sells a part of his sheep to pay his rent.

From Article 950, I translate the following: "If a serf, contrary to the obedience which he owes his lord, takes the liberty of preferring against the latter a non-authorised complaint, and especially, if he dares to make it to the Emperor himself, he shall, as supplicant and author of the complaint, be punished with the utmost rigour of the laws."

It is forbidden, however, to sell slaves, male or female, in fairs or public markets.

Article 452 prohibits the reception of any denunciation made by slaves against their lords.

Let the reader, however, mark well Article 1088: "A slave receives his own liberty and that of his family for denouncing his master, in case the latter is conspiring against the state, or has attempted the life of his sovereign, or been the accomplice of such an attempt."

I have already said that slaves of both sexes are under the necessity of rendering passive obedience to their masters. But Article 1089 adds as a corrective: "Serfs who shall, at the instigation of their masters,

have transgressed the laws of the empire, shall be punished as their accomplices, with all the rigour of the existing laws."

"Article 1071. An emancipated serf can never again become a slave, but he may be compelled to serve as a soldier all his life."

It would be too long and too fastidious a task to point out, article by article, all the discrepancies heaped together in this volume of laws, and I shall therefore content myself with citing some of the most curious cases.

As I have already said, the peasant is not at liberty to leave the plough and enter into trade or exercise a manual calling, without the permission of his master, who never gives it except when the wretched serf can pay for it handsomely in hard cash.

A serf can neither acquire nor possess any real property, nor advance his money on a mortgage. If an inheritance falls to him, the real property is sold for his benefit, and the sum realised put in the bank—if the nobleman or his agent has not swallowed it all up, which sometimes happens. To whom can the serf complain?

A slave who is a merchant cannot borrow money, nor take goods as security or on credit, without the authorisation of his master or his worship the agent, who causes himself to be well paid for it, as a matter of course.

Nor can a slave be bail for any one. An exception, however, is made by the law in favour of the serfs of the government of Pultowa, who enjoy the privilege of

becoming security to the amount of twenty-seven shillings and fourpence. No one has ever been able to explain to me the origin of this privilege.

A whole village is responsible for the imposts which any one of the inhabitants is unable to pay. If the noble proprietor refuses to pay the taxes which he owes the Crown, or if it is notorious that he cannot pay them, the serfs are obliged by law to indemnify the exchequer.

The boyar may mortgage his peasants, but he cannot sell or remove any peasant from one estate to another before himself paying for a permit.

When, in a quarrel, one of the combatants kills his adversary, the owner of the victim has the right of demanding from the master of the murderer 600 roubles of silver (about £96), which the latter makes good by extorting a fine from all his serfs who witnessed the quarrel. This is the Russian idea of justice.

III.

One of the most odious laws regulating serfdom is the following: "Noblemen are expressly interdicted and prohibited from presenting to the senate the defence of a slave who has been condemned by that body, or of causing to be laid before it any document tending to justify him, *even if he is innocent*."

I have forgotten to state that a noble is not under the necessity of rendering any one an account of his motives for punishing his slave. He is at liberty to knout him, to make a soldier of him, or to send him

and all his family to Siberia, according to his own good pleasure.

In spite of my desire to abridge as much as possible this list of strange articles, which consecrate odious principles that are an outrage to humanity, I must mention the means employed by the government to gain converts to the Russian church.

If any noble and his serfs do not profess the Greek religion, those slaves who are converted become free on the sole condition of paying their lord three and ninepence each, as an indemnity for his loss. The serfs thus emancipated for coming over to the Greco-Russian faith, are transported to villages peopled solely by converts of this description.

IV.

The foregoing are not all the monstrosities consecrated by the fourteen volumes of laws; there are others, still more frightful, of which I will not speak at present.

To suit the necessity of the moment, a ukase is issued exactly in the same manner as a regulation of police. The aristocracy alone is acquainted with it. The punishments set forth in this ukase are instantly applicable.

Up to the year 1801, the Czars and the boyars had preserved the barbarous custom of giving slaves—men, women, and children—as presents. The nobles could stake and lose, in the same evening, at lansquenet, the head of a family, who was obliged to follow his new

master, while his wife and family—played for and lost in the same way—became the property of some other boyar, who took them away to his estate. The family was disorganised and dispersed. The Emperor Alexander abolished this odious traffic. Nevertheless, in 1825, the Russians still traded in Georgians and Kirghees, whom they sent for sale to the ports of the Black Sea and the Caspian—Orenbourg, on the Oural, was the place where these odious exchanges took place. At the present day, this branch of trade is no longer openly carried on, but the law is strained in such a manner that the actual result is the same. The agents of the Russian government allow their eyes to be closed with silver roubles.

How is it possible to reconcile such a state of things in this country, which is a phenomenon in Europe, with the pretensions of its nobles, who assert that they are the most refined, the most amiable, and (do not laugh, reader) the most civilised body of men on the face of the globe, and also with the adhesion of the government to the treaty for the extinction of the slave-trade?

We must, however, in justice, say that the Emperor Nicholas has done all he can to prevail on his nobility to prepare the peasants, gradually and prudently, for complete emancipation. He was the first to set an example of disinterestedness, which has not found very many imitators. The Czar possesses, at the present day, about twenty millions of free peasants, whom he causes to be governed and disciplined according to

military rules, not to prevent the grave disorders which might arise from so sudden a change in their social condition, but to procure himself soldiers. Far from constraining them, however, to confine themselves to the cultivation of the soil, he encourages them to devote their attention to trade and skilled labour. A few nobles have imitated his example, and emancipated their serfs; but, in order to keep them in their villages, have bound them down by farming leases. By right, they are free, but in reality their condition is pretty much what it was, and the agents still continue, as they always did, to treat them like so many Negroes.

## V.

Although combining in himself three sources of immense power—the temporal, spiritual, and autocratic—the Emperor Nicholas is not always able to follow the bent of his inclination and his own grand ideas. We must allow him all credit for his excellent intentions. The peasants love him like a father, and he exercises over them a most extraordinary power. I will here give one example out of a thousand.

In 1830, the cholera visited St. Petersburg. The hospitals were crammed to overflowing with the sick, and the cemeteries choked up with corpses. All of a sudden, reports of persons being poisoned were circulated through the city. The people rushed in crowds to the hospital, forced their way into the wards, massacred the surgeons, the dispensers, and the attend-

ants, and threw their mangled bodies out of windows. More than sixty thousand moujicks, trembling with rage and terror, were assembled upon the immense square of Aboukoff; the plague was decimating them; every instant some of their number fell down stricken by the disease, and the fury of the immense multitude continued to increase. The Emperor, informed of what was going on, flew, at the utmost speed of his horses, to the spot. Getting out of his carriage, he penetrated alone into the midst of the agitated crowd, that the most insignificant trifle would have lashed up to commit a general massacre. In a voice of thunder he exclaimed: "Down on your knees; down on your knees, all of you! Let us pray together; let us pray to God to save us from this plague!" In an instant, the whole crowd was on their knees, and, with their foreheads resting on the stones of the pavement, were praying with their Emperor.

The Czar then arose, and said: "At present, retire to your homes, and in twenty minutes do not let me see a single person in the square." Twenty minutes afterwards the square was deserted. The sixty thousand moujicks had disappeared.

The serf hates his lord instinctively; the latter possesses no other influence over him than that of the stick. Even religion itself does not assist him.

Coming originally from beyond the Oural, the Russian people are still wrapped up in the swaddling clothes of the East; they have nothing domestic about them. The Russian female peasants possess no per-

sonal value in the eyes of the men, who look upon them merely in the light of an indispensable article of furniture, which they occasionally find useful.

The character of the peasant is a profound abyss, to the bottom of which no eye can pierce. Is he really aware of the enormity of the ill-treatment under which he is bowed down, and does he hoard up in his heart projects of terrible vengeance, or does he simply feel pain in the same manner as a mere animal? This is a question that I cannot answer. Like the Negro, he entertains the greatest aversion for work; like him, he has the most sovereign contempt for death; and, like him, too, he practises the art of dissimulation to an extent of which it is perfectly impossible to convey an idea. This character, however, is common to all nations bent beneath the degrading yoke of an autocratic government, under which everything is subjected to the arbitrariness and caprice of a despot.

Degraded by a yoke of iron, all intelligence has disappeared from this specimen of human nature, which no longer possesses aught save the coarse instincts of the brute. The boyars, and the government itself, since 1848, take good care not to rescue these beings from the state of gross ignorance in which they now wallow, for they might, perchance, become impatient of their yoke.

The Russian catechisms speak of the obedience which serfs owe their lords, and of the idolatrous love which they ought to entertain for the Emperor. God and the miracles of Jesus Christ are mentioned merely

as a matter of form. It is, in fact, in the name of God Himself, that these beings are fashioned to the state of servitude in which they are kept.

## VI.

The manners of the Russian peasant are those of a people still in their infancy. Everything which surrounds him reveals a state of nature that is still almost savage.

Along the highroad, his house has the form of a cabin; in the interior of the country, at a distance from the roads, it resembles a mere hovel. His tools, agricultural instruments, utensils, furniture, and raiment are gross and clumsy. The harness of his horse is made up of bits of string, old rags, and the bark of trees, plaited together. He is often surprised by the most horrible famine, a description of which would cause that which Ireland suffered in the days of her greatest distress to grow pale in comparison.

The musical faculties are but little developed in the Russian peasant. His airs are sad, plaintive, and snuffling, as is the case with all savage nations. His musical instruments are of the rudest description, consisting of a flute made of the rind of the birch, which requires the lungs of a Titan to play it, a sort of guitar, called the balaika, and a tambourine, ornamented with small bells. All this is barbarous, but not at all tragic. Whenever I hear a moujick sing, I fancy myself among the Esquimaux or Samoiedi. In the song of the fellah,

on the banks of the Nile, and in that of the Arab, there is something poetical, passionate, and dramatic; but in that of the moujick, I repeat, there is nothing.

It has often been said that the Russian peasants do not desire liberty, but feel happy in their state of servitude. This is true up to a certain point. Their present condition, however hard it may appear, strikes me as preferable to a state of freedom, such as the aristocracy would give them. The field which they plough, the garden which they cultivate, and the house which shelters them against the inclemency of the weather, do not belong to them; everything is the property of their lord, in the same manner as the Negro's hut is that of the planter. But if they possess nothing, if they owe the sweat of their brow to the boyar, the boyar owes them in return, grain wherewith to sow their field, if the crop has failed; cattle, if distemper has spread death among the flocks and herds of the province; and a house, if their former one has been consumed by the flames. Once free, the peasants would become farmers; they would cultivate the land at their own risk and peril, and the noble would no longer owe them anything. They manage, therefore, better in this state of servitude, which frees them from any feeling of anxiety for the future, than they would in a state of liberty which would force them to work. There is something of the Negro in the nature of a Russian.

From the age of sixteen, both males and females are made to labour, and every one is obliged to give three

days' work a week to his or her lord. On the other three days, the peasant cultivates just enough corn for the sustenance of his family, and that of his cattle. Agriculture, never being encouraged, is in a state of infancy. The rudeness and imperfections of Russian farming instruments carry a person back to the time of the first ploughman, Triptolemus. As the soil is not deep, a single cow suffices to draw the plough by means of pieces of string and bits of rope.

## VII.

In addition to all this, liberty does not present itself to the minds of Russian serfs, as offering a happier lot, or as being accompanied by any well-defined rights. They feel instinctively that, whether they are free or not, the stick would still remain the most energetic instrument of persuasion, and the sole argument of the law, as well as the last resource of their lord. Very few of them, except such as are engaged in trade, or some branch of skilled labour, endeavour to purchase their freedom. Besides, the conditions of the purchase are settled by their proprietor, and, if he finds it his interest to employ the services of any serf, who is either a skilled workman or a tradesman, there is no law in the code of forty-five volumes which can force him to relinquish his property. As I have before said, men in Russia are regarded as merchandise, which has its price just like a horse, an ox, or a hogshead of brown sugar.



RUSSIAN PEASANT CHILDREN.

PLAYER ON THE BALAIKA.

The nobles do not all superintend the cultivation of their estates in person. Those who reside at court entrust the administration of them to cruel and rapacious agents, or allow the peasants the privilege of cultivating the land as they may think best, on condition of their paying so many abrocks a-year, either in money, corn, or forage. This abrock (revenue) is settled by the nobleman or his agent, without appeal, at so much for every man. It varies considerably, ranging from eight, twelve, or sixteen shillings, up to as much as two pounds, or even more. In a word, I am guilty of no exaggeration in stating, that the boyar and his agent rival one another in compelling the unfortunate peasants to *come down* with their money, and in extorting from them their last farthing.

I said, a little above, that it was to the advantage of the peasant to remain a serf, because in that condition he was sure of not dying of starvation. The Russian law is very explicit on this head; it regulates the rations of the serf, as well as the amount of brute strength which may be extracted from him. But is the law on these two points ever put into execution? In the neighbourhood of the two capitals, the boyars are, without doubt, constrained to observe these rules, more or less exactly, by the relations established between the peasants and the inhabitants of the city, to whom they sell the produce of their harvest, their farm-yard, or their garden. If an instance of starvation ever reaches the ears of the Czar, woe betide the boyar! He is instantly exiled, and his estates placed under

sequestration, and administered by agents of the Crown. Truth, however, obliges me to state that the unfortunate peasants are not treated with any more humanity for all this. They simply change their harness and driver, and that is all.

But how can I describe the condition of those who are far from the capital, far from the eyes, far from the ears of the Emperor, and who have to do with masters that are avaricious and gross, barbarous and even ferocious! They are beyond hope. To speak of humanity and justice to these boyars, eaten up by debauchery, would be of no more use than if you were to talk Hebrew to them, or to preach temperance to a sot, gorged with liquor and dead drunk. The peasants should invoke the law, the reader may perchance say! They would be answered by the whip and all kinds of tortures; the knout would cut the shoulders of all who dared to seek for shelter behind the law. The boyar does not hesitate to assassinate or poison. Who is there to acquaint the Czar with these instances of cruelty? Are there any practicable roads? Besides, are not all the nobles leagued with one another? If the peasant succeeds in escaping from his own proprietor, he is sure to be brought back by the neighbouring one; and, if he is, oh, do not ask what punishment awaits him for his desertion, for, were I to tell you, I should freeze your blood!

Besides being subjected to the numerous acts of a system of barbarity unparalleled on the face of the earth, the peasants are often exposed, as I have before

said, to awful famines. There is more than one case on record, in which the inhabitants of a whole province have been under the necessity of having recourse to straw and the bark of trees—principally of the birch—which, after being pounded up together and converted into an earthy and nauseous paste, served to deceive their stomachs, torn by the pangs of hunger. Cattle, poultry, and vermin had all been killed and eaten. In 1846 or 1847, people were not told at the cost of how many tears and how much anguish, the Czar obtained the forty or fifty millions of pounds sterling, which he invested in the banks of England and France. He exported his corn at a time when a portion of his subjects were dying of starvation.

## VIII.

It is in the governments of the West, between the Ladoga and the Dwina, in the solitudes which are scarcely peopled and without roads; it is at Simbirsk, Perm, and the governments between Kasan and Moscow, that we must study the condition of the peasants, if we would obtain a true idea of it. There it is that serfdom flourishes in its fullest extent, and in all its severity; there it is that men are driven and treated like brutes; there it is that such crimes and tortures as make one's blood curdle to think of them, are practised with impunity.

Whatever may be the sentiments of humanity which animate the Emperor personally, the agents of the

government are, with the greatest effrontery, the salaried accomplices of the atrocious exactions of the boyars, and their stewards. The Russian noble does not care as much about a slave as a Virginian planter does.

In the governments situated at a distance from the two capitals, the male peasant, from his dress, his bearing, and his thick unkempt hair and beard, resembles more an animal than an intelligent being. His aspect is repulsive and nauseous, and, like those animals who possess a little pouch filled with musk or some other scent, he leaves behind him a disgusting odour. He is the picture of human nature at the lowest spoke of the social ladder. In such districts, there is nothing to distinguish the boyars from the peasants, save the usage which the former make of their sticks wherever they go: externally, they are remarkable for the same physical ugliness, the same dirtiness, and the same coarseness of manners and forms.

The boyars' wives, in the interior of the country, differ from the female peasants only by the greater richness of their dress, but their manners, their carriage, and their language are the same.

I have said, in another place, that Russia is a vast camp; nothing can be more true: a Russian village gives a person a complete idea of one. The uniformity and monotony of the habitations are enough to drive any person mad; they are as melancholy a sight as the tombs of a church-yard. All the cabins are of one invariable shape and appearance. They do not form distinct groups, but are scattered about, at hazard,

in every direction, offering a confused and irregular assemblage of hovels, of which no words can ever convey an idea. Such a thing as a street or a public square is unknown. The spaces separating the cabins are so many muddy cesspools, which are perfectly impassable in the rainy season, or on the occasion of a thaw. You get to the huts as you best can, by small narrow paths or lanes, which, in the dog-days, pour forth putrid emanations, fever, and death.

These habitations are all built of fir-logs, scarcely squared on the two sides, unevenly placed one upon the other, and dovetailed at the two extremities. The interstices are stuffed up with moss or coarse tow. The peasant takes, just as he thinks fit, the wood necessary for his cabin from the neighbouring forest, without his lord offering any opposition to his so doing.

Nothing decorates the interior of these dwellings save the undulation of a kind of vermin peculiar to the country, which is propagated in countless myriads in the seams of the resinous walls, and which, in the silence of the night, you can hear as it moves about.

A clumsy table, a few stools and forms, most filthily dirty, a broken patched-up mirror, inclosed in a red and blue frame ornamented with strange-looking uncouth flowers, constitute pretty well all the furniture, with the exception of a huge chest, in which the linen and objects of value are put away. A few pictures of saints, with the Virgin and Infant Jesus, occupy the most eastern corner of the apartment; these are the family *bogs;* a small lamp, in which stinking oil is

burnt, lights them night and day. Save two or three iron vases, of uncouth shape, the various pans and saucepans are made of wood, covered with varnish of great consistence, able to resist the action of boiling water. They have but little crockery; the little they do possess, which is used only on grand occasions, is of the commonest description, and ornamented with strange figures and designs. China is a myth. When a peasant has succeeded in obtaining a vase or a cracked cup, he places it in the most prominent part of his cabin as a curiosity. In the house of a boyar of the government of Simbirsk, I once saw, under a patched-up glass globe, a new cotton nightcap, which was preserved as something rare.

The ceilings of the cabins are roughly crossed by fir-logs, scarcely stripped of their bark; to these are suspended, by trapezia formed of the branches of trees, a few planks constituting the moveable sideboard of the household, and very much resembling a hammock. A large bench runs round the wall, to which it is fastened, and serves, in summer, as a bed for all the inmates of the house, who lie on it in a row.

The stove occupies the extremity of the room, near the entrance. It is built of bricks covered with a glaze formed of lime and a clayey kind of earth. Its form is that of the oven of French country bakers. The top of it, which is covered with sheepskins, constitutes the winter bed. The whole family, always completely dressed, sleep on it, and live in a most deplorable state of promiscuousness.

IX.

The manner in which the people are huddled together, and their impure and dirty habits, infect the apartment, the air of which is scarcely ever renewed all through the winter. The light of day finds its way inside, through two or three cats' holes and oiled paper, or a greenish glass full of bull's-eyes, and thick enough to resist a bullet. In a great many places the glass is replaced by fishskin prepared on purpose, or by plates of mica. Two or three knotty planks, roughly hewn with the axe, and held together by two cross-pieces, act as a door; while two thick leather thongs serve to attach it to the door-post and the wall. The use of hinges, locks, and bolts, is very little known. Of what use would locks be in this country? What interest can a peasant have in bolting his door? Have not the boyar and his agents a right to enter his dwelling at all hours of the day and night, and take whatever they like? Can they not carry off his wife and his daughters? Who will raise a complaint against the despot's freak? Is a peasant's habitation aught save a stable which shelters so many instruments of agricultural labour?

The stables themselves and cow-houses, are scarcely anything better than mere sheds open to every wind; the cattle are only sheltered there during the night, and, even then, simply against wild beasts.

A small number of the houses are surrounded by little gardens, enclosed by hurdles made of the branches of the fir-tree. In these gardens, the peasants cultivate a few vegetables and pumpkins, and one or two kinds of flowers that can bear the severity of the climate.

The Russian peasant never uses anything but small branches of a resinous kind of wood instead of candles, and heats his cabin with a degree of imprudence which is frequently attended with fatal results. The heat is intense enough to hatch chickens. It would be a difficult task to resist the infected atmosphere more than an hour without experiencing a sense of suffocation.

The wooden houses are said to be more healthy than the others, and I am inclined to think so myself, for, in the sudden changes from cold to heat in the temperature of the weather, I never remarked in them that peculiar exudation which covers all the walls of the stone houses: but then, on the other hand, it is absolutely impossible to destroy the vermin.

All the cabins are raised one or two feet above the ground, and perched, at the four angles, on blocks of granite, the only stone found in Russia. The storms and tempests, as well as the condensation of the soil, on the occasion of a thaw, throws them on one side, and completely disjoints the various parts. It is very uncommon for them to be perpendicular after they have been built a year. When they threaten to fall down, they are propped up with trunks of trees hardly cleared of their branches, and remain in this state, all

leaning on one side, like so many ships tacking about, until a fire consumes, or a storm turns them topsy-turvy.

Externally as well as internally, these houses bear certain marks of being the handiwork of savages. They resemble the hut of the Negro, minus the art which the latter employs in embellishing and decorating his habitation. A Russian village presents the appearance of a multitude of tents, pitched by chance, and in a hurry, during the night, or by blind men. All the most simple laws of good sense and health are set at nought.

Along the highroads everything is a lie. The government obliges the nobles to see that the houses are arranged in groups, and rigorously built in line. I have seen some villages which were not less than two and a half miles long, with the church at one end. I have never been able to discover why it was not placed in the centre. It is true that in Russia nothing is done as it is anywhere else; it seems as if the authorities found a pleasure in taking both things and men against the grain, like a glove turned inside out.

As is the case with the Negro, the Russian peasant has an irresistible inclination for spirituous liquors. He loves to drown his servitude in drunkenness. His amusements, too, consist of singing, and dancing a strange kind of dance, in which the measure is marked by a chorus of young girls.

This dance, which is more frequently indulged in by the female members of the community, takes place,

during the summer months, in the open air. On fête days, the belles of the village, dressed in their Sunday costume, their hair decked with wreaths of flowers, and their feet enveloped in high leather boots, that sadly interfere with their would-be graceful movements, go through the monotonous figures of the dance, without the slightest display of animation, while the men, who are seated apart, engage themselves in the more congenial amusements of smoking and drinking.

Winter is a season of repose, during which the forced labour due to the nobles is suspended, for what can be done when the earth is frozen several feet deep? The peasant employs his time in making uncouth ploughs, carts, and wooden articles, such as boxes, basins, spoons, etc.; or, when he is allowed, in taking on a sledge, to the nearest town, some trifling produce of the land.

The instruments he uses are as simple as his manners.

An axe, a gimlet, and an auger, are almost the only tools he has; the saw he hardly ever employs, his skill in using his axe enabling him to do without it. He cuts a plank, and even the largest trees, with as great neatness, and in less time than the most skilful carpenter, but he wastes a great deal of wood.

The nature of the Russian peasant is tame and devoid of energy; his muscular strength is two or three times less than that of men in southern climates. He sets about his work like a person who has a fever, or who is completely exhausted.




RUSSIAN PEASANT DANCE.



YOUNG PEASANT WOMAN MAKING THREAD.

X.

The women prepare flax and hemp; they weave cloth and coarse stuffs, out of which they make their clothes. They also prepare the stock of provisions for the year, such as mushrooms, bitter cabbage, and myrtle berries, which they gather in the woods. They likewise manufacture *kvasse*, of which the Russians are exceedingly fond.

In addition to this, they hoard up an ample stock of simples in case of sickness. The villages are almost destitute of everything save brandy. The medical men and druggists often reside forty leagues off, and, for the most part, the inhabitants die without professional assistance, as they do without the last rites of the church.

With the exception of the sense of sight, all the senses are blunted. Is this the result of the severity of the climate, or of punishment and bad treatment? I cannot say, but I can conscientiously assert that a Russian peasant cannot distinguish the difference between an omelette made with tallow, and a dish cooked with butter or bacon. Buck-wheat pounded in a mortar, milk in every stage of fermentation, chopped vegetables, mushrooms, and dried fish, form his principal articles of food, in conjunction with black bread, sticky and badly baked.

In spite of the insipidity and coarseness of such food, however, the propensity of the people for pro-

ducing children is very strong indeed, as, in defiance of all the causes of destruction occasioned by the climate, the indifference of the government, and the little care with which children are treated, the increase of the population is enormous.

Extremes meet, says the proverb, and very frequently nothing can be more true. I am not the first who has made the remark, that there are certain most striking points of resemblance, with regard to disposition and taste, between the Russians and the Neapolitans. Like the latter, the moujicks are noisy and expansive in their mirth. Their national dance is very like the *Saltarella*, minus the spirit and minus the music. They are fond, like the Neapolitans, of bright colours; and like them, too, they have the same disorderly habits, the same dirtiness, the same immodesty, and the same indolence. Like the Neapolitan, also, the Russian is vindictive and cruel in his vengeance, over which he will brood in his mind for years, if he cannot carry it out before, so as to completely satisfy his rage. In all the attempts at revolt which have been recorded up to the present time, the Russian peasants have taken the same view of liberty as Negroes, exterminating their masters, burning down the chateaux, violating women, and massacring all those against whom they had any cause of complaint.

The power of the noble on his estate is not limited by any law; he disposes not only of the lives and sweat of his peasants, but also of their affections, their honour, and their property; I mean that property which

the tenth commandment of God forbids him to envy. He abuses the married women and young girls with a degree of brutality which it is impossible to describe. When he has once pronounced the words, "Such is my will!" who is there, through the length and breadth of his estate, who would dare to oppose his desires? Hesitation or refusal is in his eyes an instance of insurrection, of revolt, punishable by every imaginable torture, and even with death, beneath the thongs of the knout.

The Russian is reproached with practising dissimulation, but his position as a slave obliges him to do so. Every individual who lives in perpetual fear of terrible and unmerited punishment, at the caprice of his master, learns the logic of falsehood and dissimulation. What virtue and what energy can we expect from a degraded being, accustomed to recognise no authority save that of force, and the weight of the stick upon his shoulders, and who has no respect, if I may use the term, for anything but violence?

## XI.

The Russian peasant is sad, grave, and sombre. His long hair, cut square off at his shoulders, and his long neglected beard, give him a savage appearance. His physiognomy is without movement, and without expression, while his face is branded with the marks of precocious corruption. In the presence of his masters,

his language is invariably supplicating and plaintive, like that of a man bending beneath the knout. Nor is his costume of a nature to impart to him any degree of grace; boots of thick greasy leather, reaching up to the knees, cover the extremities of trousers, formed of coarse cloth and drawn in above the hips by a buckle; a paletot of sheepskin, buttoning tight, a party-coloured woollen sash, with an axe stuck behind, large leather gloves without fingers, and a stuffed and wadded cap, of an indescribable form, complete his winter dress.

In summer, he is a little more stylish. His costume then consists of a small hat, low in the crown, with the brim slightly raised, ornamented with a large band of black velvet, round which are rolled two peacock's feathers; trousers of velvet or blue or gray linen, the bottoms of which are always stuffed into the legs of the boots, and, over all the rest, a coloured shirt, buttoning at the side, and fastened at the waist by a silk cord, intertwined with gold or silver threads.

The costume of the women is more pleasing to the eye. In summer, on festivals and Sundays, they wear a plain corsage, scooped out at the neck, and drawn tight above the breast; a plain or striped petticoat, which is occasionally garnished at the bottom with several rows of gaudy-coloured lace, coloured stockings, and red or yellow morocco shoes, embroidered with gold or silk. Their hair is generally separated in two long plaits, and their forehead covered with a diadem of card-board, spangled over with foil, and made fast



FINLAND PEASANTS IN HOLIDAY COSTUME.



ESTHONIAN PEASANTS.

behind by means of two ribbons, which hang down upon their shoulders.

In winter, they envelop themselves in a sheepskin *kasaveca*, the wool of which is very white and very long.

It would be no easy thing to describe the working costume of both sexes, and, therefore, I do not attempt it. I must mention, however, that, in winter, and in some districts even during the summer months, all the women wear high leather boots, thick enough to bid defiance to the jaw of a bull-dog.

The value of an estate depends less on the fertility of the soil, than upon the number of peasants attached to it. Elsewhere, when a person purchases a farm, he asks how many ploughs it employs. In Russia, man is the plough; and it is he alone who serves as the basis of all calculations as to the value of an estate, because he represents personally a certain income.

## THE KNOUT.

### I.

Opposite the palace of the Czars, on an island in the middle of the Neva, is the fortress on the glacis of which, in 1825, were hanged the individuals most deeply compromised in the absurd attempt at a revolution of which I have spoken in a former portion of my work.

It was built by Peter the Great. His successors, especially Catherine, after the triumphs of Gustavus, King of Sweden, who had advanced with his army to within a few leagues of St. Petersburg, made considerable additions to it. A church, consecrated to St. Peter and St. Paul, occupies the middle of the building, and receives the ashes of the Russian Emperors, and those of all the members of their family; here, also, the flags taken in war are deposited.

The tall, slender spire of the steeple is two hundred and forty feet high; it is formed of gilt copper, and seems to point out to the prisoners confined in the cells the way to Heaven, and to remind them of the verse of Dante,—

"Lasciate ogni speranza." [1]

[1] "All hope abandon, ye who enter here!"

Under the sombre sky, obscured by black and gray clouds, the brick and granite walls of the fortress, isolated in the midst of the water, present a sinister appearance; they speak to the imagination of foreigners, as well as to that of Russians, a fearful language. The red granite has something repulsive about it; the colour, varied with different tints, is like the exudation of human blood, rotting the walls, and striking outwards to denounce the tortures and punishments with which the Czarinas have defiled themselves, or of which they have been the accomplices, either to satiate their own vengeance, to smother some secret, or to please their favourites and courtiers, who also had secrets which they wished to bury in tombs of stone. How many crimes have been committed, how many sanguinary and terrible dramas have been enacted, beneath the deep, humid, and black vaults of this fortress, which has become the Bastile of the empire of the Czars! Oh! if these walls could but relate all the crimes and pangs of suffering that they have witnessed!

Opposite the fortress, on the other side of the water, is the palace of the Czars, looking like some implacable sentinel, who is keeping an eternal watch over this abyss of blood. From their windows, the autocrats can allow their eye to gloat over the victims whom their policy or their vengeance is about to immolate. No one dares to raise his glance on the gaping openings in this human charnel-house, where, instead of cannons, are to be seen corpses torn by the thongs of the knout.

The icy cold, which causes these walls to crack, which kills the sentinels in their sentry-boxes, the coachmen on their seats, the carters and the horses upon the high roads, and the bears and wolves in their dens, kills also the unhappy prisoners, when the season of ice comes round. But whenever this refinement of barbarity, which the Czars alone were capable of inventing, does not effect its end, the inundations of the river perform the task of carrying out the sentence of death.

The floor of the dungeons is on a level with the Neva. The windows look out upon the canals which wash the walls, or upon the stream itself, and when, driven back by the tempests from the north-west, the waters invade the cells, no one replies to the cries of distress and rage of the prisoners. Their groans are lost beneath these vaults covered with slimy moss and fungi. Soon afterwards, their corpses are floating upon the waters, and dashing against the double gratings. All is over, for death is discreet. Besides, who would dare to repeat these groans? Who would dare to say that he had seen corpses floating upon the tide? The secrets which concern the Czars or the state, are sealed as hermetically in the hearts of all Russians as they would be in a tomb. A single indiscreet word infallibly conducts the person who has spoken it to these catacombs, where he is left to perish by the cold or the inundations.

II.

The want of reflection on the part of the Russians is evident at every step we take. Not content with having their citadel under water, as well as the hut which its founder caused to be constructed at a few paces' distance, in order to superintend the works, they have built their capital on the same level, although they had experience to warn them against such a step.

During the great inundations of 1721, in which Peter I. himself nearly perished, and that of 1777, the Neva drowned the city under more than ten feet of water. The last inundation of all, which covered the capital with corpses, and filled it with desolation and mourning, was that of 1824, during the night from the 6th to the 7th of November.

In this inundation, all the prisoners in the citadel and the other prisons of the city perished. The police and magistrates had something else to do than to throw open the doors to these poor wretches.

It is from this fortress that those prisoners issue who are doomed to undergo a fatal ordeal—I use the expression advisedly. All the punishments invented by the ferocious barbarity of this people do not necessarily cause death. Capital punishment does not exist in Russia. It has been abolished; but, besides the waters of the Neva, there are the knout, the rod, and the whip.

Strangulation, imprisonment, the galleys, and decapitation, were punishments too mild—not sufficiently frightful, and not sufficiently salutary for restraining so many different races of all gradations of ferocity; and the legislators of the country invented, therefore, impalement, the stick, the rod, the knout, and mutilation of the face. There are, also, the eternal depths of the Siberian mines, for those who do not sink beneath one or other of these various kinds of punishment. In sober truth, the legislators do not seem to have been wrong, for the rod and the knout appear to act as a salutary check.

The knout! There is not in the language of any civilised people, a word which conveys the idea of more cruelties and more atrocious and superhuman suffering. The knout! On hearing this single word, a Russian is seized with an icy shudder, he feels the cold invade his heart, and the blood coagulate in his veins; the word produces fever; it confuses the senses, and fills the mind with terror: this single word stupifies an entire nation of 60,000,000 souls. Reader, do you know what the knout is? You will answer, perhaps, that it is death. No, it is not death; it is something a thousand times worse. For my own part, I am not sure that I should not prefer the punishment which the Caribs used to inflict upon their enemies.

Russian law does not measure punishments by the standard of physical pain. The chastisement is not proportioned to the nature of the offence. A crime has

been committed, and the penalty prescribed by a sanguinary code will be awarded, because the object of the government is, above all things, to terrify.

III.

The following is the way of administering the knout. Conceive, reader, a robust man, full of life and health. This man is condemned to receive fifty or a hundred blows of the knout. He is conducted, half naked, to the place chosen for this kind of execution; all that he has on, is a pair of simple linen drawers round his extremities; his hands are bound together, with the palms laid flat against one another; the cords are breaking his wrists, but no one pays the slightest attention to that! He is laid flat upon his belly, on a frame inclined diagonally, and at the extremities of which are fixed iron rings; his hands are fastened to one end of the frame, and his feet to the other; he is then *stretched* in such a manner that he cannot make a single movement, just as an eel's skin is stretched in order to dry. This act of stretching the victim, causes his bones to crack, and dislocates them —what does that matter! In a little time, his bones will crack and be dislocated in a very different manner.

At a distance of five and twenty paces, stands another man; it is the public executioner. He is dressed in black velvet trousers, stuffed into his boots, and a coloured cotton shirt, buttoning at the side. His sleeves are tucked up, so that nothing may thwart or embarrass

him in his movements. With both hands he grasps the instrument of punishment—a knout. This knout consists of a thong of thick leather, cut in a triangular form, from four to five yards long, and an inch wide, tapering off at one end, and broad at the other; the small end is fastened to a little wooden handle, about two feet long.

The signal is given; no one ever takes the trouble to read the sentence. The executioner advances a few steps, with his body bent, holding the knout in both hands, while the long thong drags along the ground between his legs. On coming to about three or four paces from the prisoner, he raises, by a vigorous movement, the knout towards the top of his head, and then instantly draws it down with rapidity towards his knees. The thong flies and whistles through the air, and descending on the body of the victim, twines round it like a hoop of iron. In spite of his state of tension, the poor wretch bounds as if he were submitted to the powerful grasp of galvanism. The executioner retraces his steps, and repeats the same operation, as many times as there are blows to be inflicted. When the thong envelops the body with its edges, the flesh and muscles are literally cut into stripes as if with a razor, but when it falls flat, then the bones crack; the flesh, in that case, is not cut, but crushed and ground, and the blood spurts out in all directions. The sufferer becomes green and blue, like a body in a state of decomposition. He is now removed to the hospital, where every care is

taken of him, and is afterwards sent to Siberia, where he disappears for ever in the bowels of the earth.

The knout is fatal, if the justice of the Czar or of the executioner desires it to be so. If the autocrat's intention is to afford his people a sight worthy of their eyes and their intelligence; if some powerful lord, or some great lady, wishes to indulge in the pleasure of viewing the sanguinary spectacle; if they wish to behold the victim, with his mouth covered with foam and blood, writhe about and expire in frightful agony, the fatal blow is given the very last. The executioner sells his compassion and pity for hard gold, when the family of the miserable sufferer desire to purchase the fatal blow. In this case, he inflicts death at the very first stroke, as surely as if it was an axe that he held in his hand.

In 1760, under the reign of the indolent and luxurious Elizabeth, who had abolished capital punishment, Madame Lapoukin, a woman of rare beauty, of which the Czarina was envious, was condemned to the knout and transportation, in spite of the privilege of the nobility never to suffer the former punishment. She had been fêted, caressed, and run after at court, and had, it was said, betrayed the secret of the Empress's *liaison* with Prince Razoumowsky. She was conducted by the executioners to the public square, where she was exposed by one of them, who rolled up her chemise as far as her waist; he then placed her upon his shoulders, when another arranged her, with his coarse dirty hands, in the required position, obliging her to hold her head

down, while a man of the lower classes, squatting at her feet, kept her legs still. The executioner cut her flesh into shreds by one hundred strokes of the knout, from the shoulders to the lower portion of the loins. After the infliction of the punishment, her tongue was torn out, and, a short time subsequently, she was sent to Siberia, whence she was recalled, in 1762, by Peter III.

IV.

After the knout comes the rod, or the punishment known as that of "running the gauntlet"—a punishment of another description, but still more barbarous, since it is always, or, at least, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, followed by death. In this instance, it is the army that carries out the decrees of the justice of the country, and the sentences of the autocrats. It is the army that acts the part of executioner.

The number of soldiers employed is equal to the number of blows to be given. Six thousand blows are not the highest number which the law allows to be inflicted on a prisoner, but they are the most common number. Here again Russian legislation has given proof of ingenuity. Less than a thousand blows are more than sufficient to produce death; with six thousand blows death is six times more certain.

It was my fate to be present once at this kind of execution. The following is a summary description of it.

It took place in 1841. The unhappy prisoner was a gamekeeper, of Swedish extraction, in the flower of his age. He was born in the neighbourhood of Viborg, and consequently a freeman, by the same right as the Swedes, who were the first people of Europe to live under a constitutional government. He had been for some years in the service of a prince, who had discharged him without paying his wages, — a tolerably common custom, by-the-bye, of Russian boyars. He had a wife and children, and demanded the payment of the sum due to him. Winter was close at hand, and he was destitute of everything, even of bread and wood. Very many times he had gone on foot to St. Petersburg, to beg as a favour what, in every other country, he could have claimed as a right, with fewer forms, from his creditor, and on each occasion he had related the misery which pressed upon him and his family, and all the suffering which he endured in consequence. He entreated most humbly; but a great nobleman, who possesses fifteen or twenty thousand slaves, is not acquainted with misery like the poor gamekeeper's; he has never either feared or suffered hunger and cold. The Swede was driven away with the stick; a pretty thing, forsooth, for a low, base-born scoundrel to dare to annoy a lord; to disturb the siesta and the digestion of a nobleman nursed in the lap of luxury! Having no resource left, exasperated by the unworthy treatment to which he had been subjected, and driven half mad, the gamekeeper armed himself with a pistol, and returned to the prince, who caused him

to be beaten and turned out of doors. His senses left him; he waited until the prince came out, and then shot him dead upon the spot.

The formalities of a regular trial would have been too long. The idea of a peasant killing a nobleman, a boyar, a prince Such a thing had never been known, and might prove a bad example for the people. Besides, in any other country it would also have been murder. It is not this which I would excuse. Brought up, a few hours after his crime, which he did not deny, before a council of war, that contented itself with merely identifying him, he was condemned to six thousand strokes of the rod, and, twenty-four hours afterwards, six thousand men, drawn up in two parallel lines in a plain outside the city, were awaiting, armed with rods of green wood, of the thickness of the little finger, the hour of execution. The criminal was conveyed in a cart escorted by a few men; no priest had administered to him the consolations of religion. He was fettered, and dressed in a pair of drawers, rolled up and fastened by a cord above his hips. The rest of his body was naked, or rather covered merely with a soldier's great-coat, thrown over his shoulders. Having been made to get out of the cart, his two hands were securely fastened to the muzzles of two muskets, crossing one another at the bottom of the bayonets with which they were armed. In this position, his hands rested on the barrels, and the bayonets on his breast. A roll of the drum was now heard. All the officers retired within

the ranks, while two non-commissioned officers came and took the muskets, which they held in the same position as a soldier does when he advances or retires with his bayonet at the charge. Here again we must admire the barbarity and refined intelligence of this people. At a given signal, the sufferer has to advance, with a slow step, between the rows of soldiers, each of whom, in turn, must apply a vigorous blow on his back ; the pain he endures might perhaps suggest to him the idea of passing as quickly as possible through the double row of executioners in order to lessen the number and the force of the blows which hack his flesh to pieces ; but he calculates without Russian justice. The two non-commissioned officers retreat slowly, step by step, in order to afford every one time to perform his task. They drag the unhappy wretch forward, or push him back, by driving the points of the bayonets into his breast. Every blow must tell, it must enter his back and cause the blood to gush out. No pity. Every one must do his duty. As I have said in another part of this work, the Muscovite soldier is a machine which is not allowed to possess any individual feeling ; and woe betide his own shoulders, if he manifests the least hesitation, for he will, on the spot, receive from twenty-five to a hundred blows, according to the caprice of the general who has the honour of commanding the six thousand executioners. The Russian government is scrupulous in the most trifling details. It insists on everything being done with precision. But with such men as it has at its disposal it cannot trust to chance, and

therefore it has rehearsals to execute a human being just as it exercises its troops previous to a review. A few hours fore the time appointed for the punishment, a truss of ay or straw placed upon a chariot is driven along the ranks.

The sufferer advanced up to the nine hundredth and third stroke; he did not utter a single cry, or prefer a single complaint; the only thing which betrayed his agony, from time to time, was a convulsive shudder. The foam then began to form upon his lips and the blood to start from his nose. After fourteen hundred strokes, his face, which had long before begun to turn blue, assumed suddenly a greenish hue; his eyes became haggard and almost started out of their sockets, from which large blood-coloured tears trickled down and stained his cheeks. He was gasping and gradually sinking. The officer who accompanied me ordered the ranks to open, and I approached the body. The skin was literally ploughed up, and had, so to say, disappeared. The flesh was hacked to pieces and almost reduced to a state of jelly; long stripes hung down the prisoner's sides like so many thongs, while other pieces remained fastened and glued to the sticks of the executioners. The muscles, too, were torn to shreds. No mortal tongue can ever convey a just idea of the sight. The commandant caused the cart which had brought the prisoner to be driven up. He was laid in it on his stomach, and although he was completely insensible, the punishment was continued upon the corpse, until the surgeon ap-

pointed by the government, who had followed the execution step by step, gave orders for it to be suspended. He did not do this, however, until there was hardly the slightest breath of life left in the sufferer's body.

When the execution was stopt, two thousand six hundred and nineteen strokes had cut the body to pieces.

But, in Russia, the fact of striking a corpse is not cruel enough, and would not inspire a nation of slaves with a sufficient amount of terror. A man must revive before he undergoes the remainder of his punishment.

The unhappy wretch was taken to the hospital, where, as is the custom in these cases, he was placed in a bath of water saturated with salt, and then treated with the greatest care and solicitude until a complete cure was effected, so that he could bear the rest of his sentence. In all instances, and at all times, the penal laws of Russia are stamped with atrocious barbarity. It was seven months before he was cured and his health re-established; and, at the expiration of this period, he was solemnly taken back to the place of execution, and forced once more to run the gauntlet, in order to receive his full amount of six thousand strokes. He died at the commencement of this second punishment.

## V.

When a prisoner sometimes escapes with his life—which, however, is a very unusual circumstance—he is

sent to end his days at the bottom of the mines of Siberia.

I will not dilate upon the other kinds of punishment—the whip and the stick—which are the most common methods of redressing grievances. In both these cases, two men alone are sufficient to execute the sentence. The poor wretch condemned to smart beneath the rattan or the lashes of the *cat with seven tails* is laid, with his body bare, upon a bench. One of the executioners seats himself astride upon the sufferer's legs, and the other upon his head, and both of them strike him in turn with similar instruments, like two blacksmiths belabouring an anvil, until the nobleman or his wife judges the punishment sufficient.

In Russia, persons can escape more easily from the punishments to which they are sentenced than in any other country. When a peasant has the means of paying his executioners, the latter spare his skin.

After the knout and the rod, comes Siberia. When a Russian subject is condemned to exile, his beard is shaved off, and his hair cut short in front in the shape of a brush, like that of the soldiers, and quite close behind. He is dressed in a pair of linen trousers, a great-coat, of very coarse cloth, a round cap, like a pancake, and enormous leather boots, without stockings or socks. He is then despatched upon a sledge or a car, in company with other exiles, under the escort of a few Cossacks, as far as Irkoutsk, or beyond it.

These exiles are made to travel in all weathers; no

matter how intense the cold may be, they must reach their destination. More than half of them perish on the road. During the journey, their movements are free, and no precaution is taken to prevent their flight. What could they do with liberty? They possess no passport; and in Russia it is impossible to travel for twelve hours without papers. An inhabitant of Moscow or St. Petersburg cannot enter or leave the city without showing the soldiers stationed at the barriers either a permit or a passport. The troops in French barracks are more free than the population of Russia.

After all, Russia is only an immense barrack, in which every one is in a state of arrest.

## THE CLIMATE.

I.

In the Russian climate there is no transition; every thing is abrupt. You emerge from one season to fall suddenly into another. The change takes place in a single day. Yesterday, there were fifty-two degrees of heat; this morning, there are twenty degrees of cold, and ten inches of snow. Yesterday, you sailed in a boat down the Neva; and this morning, you drive over it in a sledge. I will not compromise myself by asserting that spring and autumn exist; winter begins, so to speak, in the middle of August, and terminates in the middle of May. Summer, consequently, lasts only during June and July, in which time, however, there are often falls of snow. In winter, the night is twenty hours long; day begins to break between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, and ends at two o'clock in the afternoon. In summer there is no night. It is a change from suffocating heat, during which the air is obscured by dense clouds of dust, to a penetrating humidity, which paralyses the limbs. On an average, at St. Petersburg and Moscow, the thermometer marks more than twenty degrees of cold. On the severest days

the mercury frequently descends to twenty and forty, sometimes even sixty-six, degrees below freezing point.

Our ordinary experience would lead us to expect that in this country the temperature would vary according to the difference in the latitude and longitude,—for example, like the temperature of European parallels : this, however, is not the case. Astrakhan and Gourief on the Caspian, and Odessa and Taganrog on the Black Sea, are between the 43d and 44th degrees of latitude, like Marseilles, Nice, Genoa, Florence, Ancona, and Constantinople ; yet the ports of the Russian cities are frozen and shut up from all navigation during several months of the year. Owing to the proximity of St. Petersburg to the Baltic Sea, the climate there is most changeable, and the difference in the temperature extreme. I have seen, in the month of January, rain in the morning, with a complete thaw, and the streets buried beneath a thick covering of mud, while, in the evening, there were thirty-four degrees of cold. In 1798 the thermometer sunk to about seventy-four degrees of Fahrenheit ; and, during thirty-five successive days, to from forty-eight to fifty degrees.

We find, from the tables of the Observatory, that on an average, in the course of ten years, during the month of March, there were nine days of clear weather, eleven days of fog, eleven days of snow, and two days of rain ; that, in the month of September, there were only seven days of clear weather ; that the month of May is sometimes exceedingly cold and inclement ; and that,

during the summer, there are frequent instances of hoar-frost. We also learn, from the same authority, that in the month of December, the days are only five hours long; that, in the month of November, there are only three fine days, but eights days of fog, and twenty days of snow; and that the month of January is pretty much the same: during neither is the day longer than three hours.

One year, at Archangel, the glass fell down as low as one hundred and ten degrees Fahrenheit of cold, and the mercury was frozen into a solid mass as hard as iron.

At St. Petersburg and Moscow, there are, every year, one hundred and twenty-three days of rain, and eighty-seven fine days; during from one hundred and ninety to two hundred days, there is a continual frost, for ninety-two days of which period the snow falls to the amount of *twenty-three thousand* cubic inches. The greater portion of the time may therefore be called winter. No person ventures out without being absolutely compelled to do so: the snow creaks under your foot; the window-panes crack and disappear beneath a thick covering of ice, the crystals of which assume all kinds of strange and monstrous forms. The birds and animals are frozen; the crows, the pigeons, and the sparrows, millions of which inhabit the city, creep into holes—into the recesses of the cornices—into the windows—indeed into every place where they can find a shelter from the north wind, and never leave their retreats unless pressed by hunger, or brutally driven out; the



RUSSIAN SLEDGE-DRIVERS.

GUARD AND DRIVER OF THE IMPERIAL MAIL.

moment they expand their wings they fall down frozen on the ground. The sentinels are relieved every hour, and, although muffled up in the thick furred skins of bears or wolves, it frequently happens that some of them perish. Whenever the Czar passes before a post, all the platoon on duty turn out in full uniform, and present arms, while the drums beat a salute. The cold kills one or two men; but that is a matter of no consequence, since discipline requires it. The soldiers who are scattered singly about the city stop and uncover before the Emperor; the cold cleaves their skulls, but that, too, is a matter of no consequence; discipline reserves some hundred blows with the stick for any one who is deficient in politeness towards a superior.

II.

When the cold sinks below thirty-four degrees, the theatres are shut and parties and balls put off. Who would dare to brave such weather? Coachmen are frozen on their boxes, and postilions in their saddles, from which they are lifted stiff and icy. Every winter there are thousands of accidents of this description; they are so frequent that no one pays any attention to them. The servants who go out to procure provisions and the moujicks are the only individuals to be met in the deserted streets. A person might believe himself to be in a city of the dead, or in one in a state of siege, or devastated by the most terrible of plagues.

The streets are buried beneath a covering of ice, several feet thick. The snow which covers it and over which the sledges glide is as hard as gravel, muddy, and of a blackish colour. If it were not for the dazzling whiteness of that which remains upon the roofs, the projections and the cornices of the windows, and the cold which reminds you that you are not in the East, you would suppose that the streets were strewed with gravel. The atmosphere is murky, thick and spangled with showers of little crystals, which circulate in the air like atoms of dust. Every night, and, if necessary, several times in the course of the day, the police compels the porters of the different houses to sweep the snow and ice from the pavement. But for this precautionary measure, it would be impossible to approach any place.

The trees are completely enveloped with hoar-frost; at a distance, any one would suppose them to be crystalized. The iron or wooden railings of the bridges and quays are likewise coated with thick crystals.

Before being covered with ice, the Neva carries down melted snow in its stream; at fifteen degrees below freezing point, ice begins to form on the river and canals. This generally happens in the course of October. A few days of tolerably sharp frost enables people to cross them in sledges. Before there was an iron bridge, persons used to cross the river in a kind of bracket-seat, formed of boards bound together and nailed on stop-planks independent of each other, so that if the ice happened to

break beneath the weight of the passengers, the circumstance was not attended by any serious consequences. When the ice is three inches thick, it may be traversed on foot; when it is from four to five inches, it may be crossed by sledges and horses; when it is nine inches, by wheeled carriages with several horses; and, when it is eleven inches, by artillery, cavalry, and the entire army, regiment by regiment. Even reviews of several hundred housand men may be held on it.

To facilitate the crossing of the rivers, lakes, and gulfs, the police causes direct roads to be traced out upon the ice to abridge the distance. These roads and paths are bordered by trunks of young fir-trees, with all their branches on them, fifteen or twenty feet high, stuck into the ice or snow, at a distance of about ten or twelve yards from each other, exactly like trees planted on the high road. This precaution is necessary for the passage from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt, a distance of about a mile and three quarters, and on the vast branches of the delta formed by the Neva where it flows into the gulf. Sudden squalls are extremely violent; they heap up the snow, and cause all traces of the roads to disappear in a few minutes. These whirlwinds of snow bury both men and beasts. The snow is so deep towards the end of winter, that only the tops of the fir-trees are visible; all the rest of them is buried.

It sometimes happens that sudden and violent gales from the north-west cause the water to rise and break the ice. In such cases, all that is on it is swallowed up:

men, animals, and vehicles, all perish. The tempest ceases, and the blocks of ice, heaped up and driven against each other, unite, and present a curious sight to the eyes of travellers, namely, that of a river, a lake, or a sea, whose waves and billows have been petrified in a single instant. They exhibit precisely the same projections, and the same undulations, and it is necessary to wait until the snow has fallen and filled up their thousands of valleys before venturing on them in a sledge.

The breaking up of the ice never takes place before the middle of April, and sometimes later. When the ice is once set in motion, the bridges of boats swing round on their anchors, and remain on one side or the other of the river. The ice, while undergoing the process of decomposition, invariably obeys certain fixed rules. First of all, the layer of snow which covers it melts, and is succeeded by a layer of water; this, being warmed by the temperature, which becomes milder every day, eventually pierces the ice, that turns black and spongy, and becomes disaggregated, when woe betide any one who is imprudent enough to venture on it.

## III.

A phenomenon, which was much talked of in 1740, more than a century ago, and about which the Russians still take a delight in speaking, was the palace of ice, built by the orders of the Empress Anne. Constructed of enormous blocks of ice, cut like stones, this palace

was fifty feet long, sixteen deep, and three thick, and covered with a roofing of snow upon a framework of timber. Inside were tables, chairs, and beds, in fact, a complete set of furniture. Before the edifice were placed pyramids, equestrian statues, and animals formed of ice; besides six cannons, capable of receiving balls of six pounds, and two mortars of the same substance. One of these cannons was discharged, and the ball, which was likewise of ice, went through a plank two inches thick, at a distance of sixty paces, without at all shaking the building. It would appear that, in the evening, when the palace was lighted up, the effect was most striking.

This magnificent palace proves only one thing: the inclemency and severity of the cold and the climate.

During all the winter, the cold is so intense, that, if you chance to open one of the panes in your window to let a little fresh air into your room, the warm vapour rushes out with the violence of a rocket. If you venture abroad, the cold instantly attacks and seizes you in every part of your body. Your nose is drawn up; your mouth and throat become contracted, your eyes seem to retreat to the very back of your skull, while your ears are filled with a buzzing noise. You can only breathe through the folds of a scarf or a silk handkerchief. The hoar frost immediately envelops your eyebrows, eyelashes, beard, and hair, and occasions a thousand little pricking pains, which draw tears from you. Some one has jokingly remarked, that a man's words are frozen; this is literally true up to a certain

point, for the chest is so oppressed, irritated, and even frozen, that the organs of respiration refuse to fulfil their office. When a person is absolutely compelled to go out, there is one precautionary measure which he must take, and that is, to rub his face from time to time with the fur cuff of his pelisse, in order, by this slight friction, to revive the circulation of the blood under the skin.

Every one is acquainted with the means of thawing any of the limbs of his body which may have been attacked by the cold. It is the employment of snow and iced-water, previous to entering a warm room. During one whole winter, I was in the practice, whenever I was obliged to go out, of smearing all my face over with a slight coating of pomatum. The cold has great difficulty in obtaining a hold upon fatty bodies, and I was thus enabled to brave the severity of the climate for several hours together, always resisting it much better than my companions. The snow has the tenacity and strength of ice ; it reflects the rays of the sun so vividly that the eyes cannot bear its brilliancy.

Towards the end of winter, a tolerably long drive in a sledge becomes fatiguing, while a regular journey is almost impossible. The winds and sudden squalls, of which I have already spoken, heap up the snow, and render the surface of the roads undulating. A stone, or the branch of a tree, is sufficient, when the wind is blowing, to form a very large hillock. Unless a person is accustomed to the shocks caused by such objects, he



will find it a difficult thing to travel. It is one continued course of sudden and violent pitching and tossing. A vessel which is raised in the air by the waves of the sea, glides gently along in the deep valleys furrowed out by the tempest, and is borne upwards again in the same manner; but a sledge is rudely dashed against every obstacle, and falls like a stone to the bottom of the ruts with which it meets, so that both men and horses have great difficulty in supporting a journey of any length.

One individual whose destiny it is to encounter all these dangers and difficulties, and to whom, even during the severest seasons, no respite is permitted, for he is born to live or die either in his *telega* or his sledge, is the *feldjäger*, or government courier. This living telegraph, who conveys the commands of the Czar to a fellow-automaton, perhaps some thousand leagues distant, to be by him again transmitted across a similar extent of country, sooner or later pays the forfeit of his life to the severities of the climate. Even during the summer months, his duties are none of the most agreeable. Condemned to travel day and night until his journey is completed, in a vehicle styled a *telega*—of all carriages on wheels the most uncomfortable, consisting, as it does, of a little cart without springs or back, with two leather seats, on the foremost of which sits the driver—the *feldjäger* pursues his solitary way exposed to considerable danger. The Russian coachman is perfectly reckless when driving over rough mountain roads. At the

commencement of a declivity, he will judiciously enough restrain his horses; but, as he proceeds, he becomes tired of his prudence, and at the most dangerous point of the descent generally puts them into a smart gallop, when the vehicle only escapes being overturned by his confidence and skill, and the firmness of the legs of the spirited but weak and tired animals, that he is urging along on so reckless a course.

So great is the respect with which the *feldjäger* is regarded by the common people, that the peasants, whether on foot or in vehicles, make haste to clear the way before him. At his approach every obstruction on the road vanishes like magic.

IV.

Sledge-driving in the city is not always unattended with danger, even when the snow presents a surface as flat as that of a lake. Not all horses can draw this kind of vehicle, and, when you have to turn the corner of a street, the light sledge will overturn and throw you out to a considerable distance, with your head against the walls of the houses, or the other sledges which happen to be passing. Ten times has this accident occurred to myself, and I always got off with a few scratches, but every one is not so lucky.

Winter is a boon to the inhabitants of the towns as much as to those of the country. As soon as sledging has commenced, the markets are actually encumbered with provisions of every kind, which the peasants bring



THE GRAND-DUKE MICHAEL'S SLEDGE.

in from all quarters. Vegetables, meat, fish, game—in a word, everything is frozen. Nothing can be more grotesque to behold, than the markets peopled with frozen pigs, sheep, calves, and oxen, standing on their hind-legs, or placed upon all fours around the tradesmens' stalls. A person would almost think that these animals were going through the exercises of the learned pig. When there is a deficiency of snow, the towns suffer. Living becomes very dear; and sometimes there is a famine. Navigation as well as sledging being suspended, the provisions cannot be forwarded to their destination, or, if they can, reach the town in a damaged state, and are exorbitantly dear. Again, the earth and the seed in it not being protected by a layer of snow, the severe cold kills all the corn.

The transition from one season to the other occupies only a few days. After a week at most of fine, icy rain, and thick, hard sleet, the heat begins to be felt, and goes on increasing every day. Vegetation progresses with prodigious rapidity; in the space of a single day, especially after a warm rain, the trees bud and are covered with green leaves. But it would be a piece of great imprudence to trust this apparently fine weather; storms frequently are formed upon the Ladoga, whence they come and break over the town in the shape of hail or snow.

From the middle of February, the days begin to grow longer; towards the middle of April, the ice on all the rivers commences breaking up; towards the middle

of May, the sun sets between ten and eleven o'clock, while in June, and up to the middle of July, it never leaves the horizon. People can read, write, and play all night without the aid of any artificial light whatever. For twenty minutes, at the most, does the sun seem to disappear, but the sky remains perfectly lighted by large clouds of warm red vapour, like those produced by a large building on fire during the night. Shortly afterwards, the sun re-appears with increased brilliancy. The shadows caused by its rays are immense; those of the trees and public monuments are actually gigantic in their proportions. On one occasion, as I was returning home, at two o'clock in the morning, I had the curiosity to measure my own shadow, and found it more than two hundred and fifty paces long.

## V.

Nothing strikes one's imagination so vividly as the silence which reigns around from eleven o'clock at night to five o'clock in the morning. The air possesses so high a degree of sonority, that sounds are transmitted with great distinctness very considerable distances. The human voice, the noise of a horse's hoof, the barking of dogs, the howling of wolves, the warbling of birds, the footsteps of a man walking upon the gravelly shore, are singularly audible. It has happened to me more than thirty times, when I inhabited the islands during summer, to pass the night upon my balcony, smoking and

contemplating at my ease the strangeness of nature in these parts. I used to hear very clearly, and follow, without losing a single syllable, all the conversation of the peasants and fishermen, who were at a distance of nearly a mile and a quarter from me. I own that, at such moments, Russia struck me as sublime.

Exposed to the influence of heat and light, both night and day, the vegetation grows perceptibly to the eye. The story of the fairy *Fine Oreille* hearing and seeing the grass grow, no longer appears to me a mere nursery tale. What was yesterday, at the commencement of May, covered with snow, has reached its full growth, is ripe, is harvested, and is housed towards the end of July.

Every medal has its reverse. The summer is short. As early as the 1st of August, the days have decreased so rapidly, that it begins to grow dark at seven o'clock, while, at eight, the lamps are lighted in the streets. The *quasi* heat which the inhabitants found so agreeable about the middle of July exists no longer, save in their imagination; they see the air serene, and the sun tolerably brilliant, and fancy, in consequence, that it is still summer, and that the weather is still warm. At this period, a person cannot well go out of doors without enveloping himself in woollen clothing and taking his cloak. In September, the fine icy rains and the frosts recommence, and, in October, the ice and the snow once again cover the entire surface of the country, from north to south.

I repeat it: the climate is abrupt, rude, and vari-

able. In the month of July, the heat in the middle of the day is suffocating, while the temperature in the evening is icy-cold, and the atmosphere in the morning obscured by thick, fetid, catarrhal fogs. Owing to these sudden transitions, consumption, fever, pneumonia, apoplexy, and rheumatism, are very common. The accidental suppression of perspiration is equivalent to an almost immediate sentence of death. However, in everything God has placed the remedy by the side of the disease; an infusion of dried wild strawberries, taken as hot as possible, and sufficiently early, re-establishes the perspiration in a few minutes, and saves the person whose life is endangered.

The aspect of this immense country, buried under several feet of snow, which levels everything—rivers, lakes, swamps, and even the sea itself—beneath a solid surface of ice, several feet thick, is very imposing, but insurmountably melancholy; and, whenever a storm raises the snow and drives it like a swelling ocean before it, many a drama and many a terrible accident follow.

When it begins to thaw, the water invades the whole country, and transforms it into a marsh. The highways, the roads, and the streets of the various towns, even including those of the capital itself, are but so many quagmires. As long as this state of things lasts it is impossible to go anywhere, either in sledges, in coaches, or on foot.

One thing struck me very forcibly, and that was, the vigour and dark hue which distinguish the verdure

of all the vegetables. This is a phenomenon which I have always remarked in all countries where there is much snow, and where the soil remains covered with it for a considerable period of the year.

The climate of Russia is the most detestable one in the world; and St. Petersburg is built in a district where the climate is more frightful than in any other part of Russia. The Russians themselves acknowledge this. Nothing thrives, nothing grows there; there is no kind of fruit save some wild berries, which are scarcely sufficient for the bears, while in Sweden, in the same, or even a higher degree of latitude, apple-trees, pear-trees, all kinds of cherry-trees, "guigniers," and currant-bushes, thrive admirably in the open air, and produce fine and excellent fruit. Capital vegetables, with which the markets are well supplied, are also grown there. But in Russia, if persons want cherries they must have hot-houses: if they want asparagus and green peas, they must pay two pounds ten a bundle for the former, and a pound a pint for the latter. A pear costs as much as six or eight shillings. To make up for this, however, there are pumpkins, gherkins, and mushrooms in abundance.

The winter amusements consist of sledge-driving, theatres, concerts, balls, evening parties, and gambling; the stakes are tremendously high, and hundreds of thousands of roubles are dropt upon the table. In addition to this, there are the ice mountains, and the diversion of hunting bears, elks, and wolves, and shooting black-fowl.

## ST. PETERSBURG.

### I.

St. Petersburg is a city full of frightful contrasts and ridiculous discrepancies. It is a market-place, on which persons from all nations of the earth elbow one another. In reality, there are only three classes there: the military, the rich, and the poor. The military are dressed up, decked out, befeathered, and beplumed; the poor are covered with the stinking skins of beasts; and the rich habited according to the most recent, and oftentimes the most ridiculous, Parisian fashions. Gold elbows the rags of the most abject misery; the most gorgeous Lyons silks, and beautiful furs, rub against the greasy tatters of the peasant. A person might imagine that he was viewing some monster exhibition of an extraordinary people, whom thousands of individuals from every nation under the sun had come to visit and contemplate.

Three distinct currents of population roll on and circulate silently through this city, without ever being confounded, or mingling with each other: these are the





RUSSIAN PEASANT GIRL.

NURSEMAID AND CHILDREN.

boyars, the moujicks, and the foreigners. I do not speak of the class of tradesmen, which cannot be reckoned, as far as numbers, consideration, and influence are concerned; covered with disdain and contempt by the nobles, who are jealous of its wealth, and even by the peasants, from whom it springs and whom it treats with inhumanity, this class does not constitute anything like what with us is termed the middle classes. In St. Petersburg, there are, in fact, only plebeians and patricians.

No people on the face of the globe possesses more vanity, more pride, more ostentation, and more national *amour-propre*, than the Russians. They push this defect of their moral organisation to the most absurd lengths. It is, however, a defect inherent to all nations who are merely beginning their career, and who have no history of their own, to play the bully and look upon themselves as superior to all the world besides.

The aristocracy has no individuality; it is, in turn, English, German, French, or Turkish, according to the fashion of the day or the caprice of the court, which it exerts itself to copy: it would turn Chinese, Laplander, or Hottentot, and would be tattooed like the New Zealanders, if the Czar but expressed a wish to that effect. Vanity, more than the thirst after pleasure or the desire of instruction, irresistibly impels the nobles to quit their country, and repair to London, Vienna, Naples, Rome, and Paris, or to visit the various watering-places for the purpose of gambling. This aristocracy possesses nothing

of its own; it only wears what foreigners lend it; it dines, sups, dresses, dances, and bows like the French, smokes like the Germans, drinks like the English, sings like the Italians, and would chew opium and haschich like the Turks, if, by so doing, it could please its master. It has nothing belonging to itself individually; its members are still the Tartars of Tamerlane, white-washed over with a coating of civilisation, which is rubbed off every moment. Their Scythian and savage nature can still be discerned palpitating under the various borrowed disguises in which both men and women are eternally showing off. These people are harsh and rude in their politeness; it seems as if they were only polite by accident, or from obedience to some ukase, threatening them with the knout or the rod. They are civilised on the surface alone; not one of them is radically changed. These nobles speak bad grammar, and cannot even write their own language. If you would praise any one, you say, "He does not understand Russian;" which is another manner of saying, "That person is particularly well educated." But, on the other hand, they speak all the languages of Europe. They make a parade of generous sentiments, which do not at all accord with their natures. You ask them for nothing, and they offer to do you all kinds of good services—they forget their promises when you require their fulfilment. The majority are ruined; but, in spite of this, appear to be tolerably opulent. In public, they make an ostentatious display of a state of affluence

which in reality does not exist. They have a box at the opera and one at the French plays, while, at home, they feed like boors; their wives are covered with diamonds, and only change their linen when it is falling off their backs.

II.

The pedestrians move about the streets, the markets, and the public squares, in perfect silence; it seems as though you were in a country of deaf and dumb persons; everything wears a sombre and lugubrious aspect: you feel that the people are not free, and that they are constrained in their actions. It always appeared to me, when I remarked the silence and anxious air of the multitude, that they were returning from an execution, or going to a funeral.

The Neva itself flows with great rapidity and without noise; its waters are deep, and of a sinister colour, changing their hue like the eye of a serpent; the stream appears to be in a hurry to traverse a city that is cursed, and pass as quickly as possible the walls of the fortress, which are too frequently reeking with human blood. It is a difficult task to find two or more Russians walking together and indulging in the pleasure of a friendly and confidential conversation. They look at one another and are ailent. It seems as if the knout, like some invisible agent, were hovering in the air, and that every one entertained fears for the safety

of his shoulders. You do not even hear, as is the case everywhere else, the cries of the various itinerants who sell things in the streets. Discipline is visible at every step you take. All you hear are the coachmen shouting to the foot-passengers to get on one side, like the monotonous croaking of so many crows. This isolation and silence in the midst of a city inhabited by four hundred thousand souls, freeze the blood and fill the mind with a sort of terror.

Every one is fashioned to a state of such odious servility, that no one takes any kind of bodily exercise save mechanically; the legs cause the body to move, but the head never thinks. People cannot even choose their own residence. If you are uncomfortable in a particular house, and desire to transport your Penates somewhere else, you are obliged to give twenty-four hours' information of the fact to the police, who must know why you leave one quarter, and what motive makes you choose another. You cannot proceed ten paces beyond the town without your passport; even a foreigner has no more power to escape this ambient tyranny than a Russian subject.

At every step, you run up against soldiers, some of whom are in grand costume, and others almost naked. No officers of any grade ever quit their uniform; they always appear ready to pass a review or take the field; twenty times a-day have I asked myself, whether I was not in a camp in disguise.

At the first glance, it is evident that the city was a



piece of folly on the part of a barbarian, who entertained impossible projects, tyrannised over the elements as he did over his subjects, and wished to change the character of a desert, a solitude, a morass. The ostentatious palaces, the wooden huts, the quays of red granite, the streets that are tumbling down, the pasteboard houses, ornamented with colonnades, peristyles and pediments, and the Greek, Turkish, Persian, Lutheran, and Roman-looking churches, all rear their forms like odious souvenirs of slavery—like an insult to humanity. There it stands, this city without suburbs, isolated like a city that is cursed, in which a whole population of slaves is writhing under the grasp of the terrible punishments of an implacable will—a pestiferous marsh in which death stalks about at his ease. I have on some occasions endeavoured to leave it, and gone six or seven leagues without meeting with a village, a hut, or anything save scanty herbs and dwarfed brushwood.

Everything betrays the encamped tribe. Without moving beyond the precincts of the city, a person may easily convince himself that, wherever you like to take a Russian, from Archangel to Odessa, from Kiew to the furthest limits of Kamtschatka, his state of ignorance and barbarism is everywhere exactly the same: everywhere do you meet with the same rough, coarse manners and habits. I must except, however, the inhabitants of the shores of the Baltic and of the Gulf of Finland, who were formerly subject to Sweden. They are sober, and not drunken like the Russians, with milder and

more polished manners, and have preserved a portion of their German habits. But the Russian spirit is every day obliterating the intelligence of these people of Lithuanian or Saxon origin.

II.

The nobles, ruined by the gaming table, undergo every kind of privation, and exist on sour cabbage, cucumbers, mushrooms, salted or pickled fish, and milk food, but they avail themselves of their right to have four horses to their carriages. They have valets and other domestics, whom they do not pay, whom they do not keep, whom they do not clothe, and who are forced to plunder in order to live.

The livery worn by this race of menials, has clothed the shoulders of ten generations, and lost all trace of its primitive colour from excessive use and endless repairs. Beneath the livery, the servants have no linen, and scarcely any other article of dress; a piece of cotton cloth rolled round their neck deceives the spectator into the idea that they have a cravat; their boots, like the slippers of their mistresses, are all run down at heel, and bear ill-concealed traces of numerous rents. A pocket handkerchief is a thing which is completely unknown; they wipe their nose with their fingers or the cuff of their coat.

There is one circumstance, however, which is remarkable all over Russia, and that is, the air of easy comfort,

coquetry, and cleanliness that all the houses possess; but they do so only outside, on the front which looks out into the street. Their appearance is very deceptive; scarcely have you passed the threshold of a door ere you might suppose that you were in a hovel. The stairs are low and dark, and emit a most filthy smell. This uncleanliness extends up as far as the vestibule, and even penetrates into the antechamber. It is by no means uncommon or extraordinary to see a great lady get out of her carriage and enter some alley or other to satisfy a necessity of nature. In this respect the first-rate houses, the houses of the richest people, and even of *millionaires*, do not differ much from those of other persons. The only exceptions are those, which are very limited in their number compared to the rest, where the principal entrance, the entrance of honour, is guarded by a porter, with a gold-headed cane, a halbard, and a cocked hat. To make up for this, however, the principal streets are scrupulously clean. The police punishes very severely all infractions of the regulations, which it looks upon as crimes against public decency.

If we penetrate into the interior of these noble mansions, we shall find that they are in perfect keeping with the habits of their respective masters. As a general rule, they present a compendium of all ages, of all styles, and of all countries on the face of the globe: the inmates appear to be lodged in the rooms of an inn, like travellers who are merely passing through a place where they make a stay of a week or two.

In order to give an idea of the actual state of things, I will just draw a sketch, a mere rapid outline, of a noble family in pinched circumstances. Families of this description form the majority, and be sure, reader, that when I have shown you one, you will have seen almost all.

These people have no ideas, they do not know how to invest poverty with the least appearance of poetry. We have just seen what the stairs are like. The antechamber serves as a cloak-room; it is, also, the chamber of the lackey, whose bed is concealed beneath a screen of paper or green cloth; it is the room in which he sleeps away his drunkenness, and in which, every morning, he cleans the shoes of the household. There is also a stove, a row of hat-pegs, and a bench covered with some stuff or other which the visitor suspects to have been velvet, in the days when the town of Utrecht was famous for that material, and in which all kinds of domestic vermin thrive most marvellously.

All the other rooms resemble one another, as far as the furniture is concerned. The walls are generally coloured green, blue, or yellow, according to the taste of the proprietor, but the tints chosen are always excessively light. The ceiling is painted by means of a stencelling process, and is also surrounded by a border.

The furniture of the state-rooms is less than modest, consisting of hay sofas, covered with printed calico, glazed stuff, or sometimes cloth; chairs, settees, and fauteuils of a similar character; consoles of beechwood

or mahogany, with glasses above them, a piano, which is everywhere an indispensable article, and that is all.

The bed-room is entirely taken up by a family bedstead, six feet square, without curtains, and of the German form. This is a patriarchal piece of furniture, intended for show. Like the beds of our ancient kings, it is placed in the middle of the room, with the head against the wall. On one side is a large round basket, ornamented with taffetas, and three feet in height; it contains the pillows in the day-time. In the recess of the principal windows is a dressing-glass, surrounded by gauze and rose-coloured, blue, and white muslin.

All the windows of the different rooms are without curtains of any description. There is merely a simple blind of coloured calico, which can be drawn up and down at pleasure. There are neither pictures nor drapery. A few pots of sickly flowers ornament the window-sills. In one of the corners of every room hangs the likeness of a male or female saint, most frequently of the Virgin, before which is a little night lamp, that is lighted on grand festivals.

Among the less wealthy classes, the most favourite piece of furniture is the sofa. It serves two purposes. All day, it stands in the room for show; at night, it is transformed into a bed. It may truly be said, that the majority of Russians, with the exception of the peasants, who lie upon the floor, live and die upon a sofa, behind a screen.

IV.

There still remains one part of the house for me to describe—namely, the kitchen. Screw up your courage, friend reader, and follow me into this smoky cavern. Of what colour are the walls? To answer the question we should have to coin a word. The whole place smells of burnt kitchen stuff, and resembles the most filthy hovel. On the black, greasy articles of furniture, swarming with *tarakans*, are enormous joints of meat, turned green by the infectious vapours which surround them. Before the fire you perceive other joints, which it would puzzle you to name; you ask yourself, in vain, of what animal they formed a part; all around you, you behold provisions of every description lying huddled together in hopeless confusion. In the midst of this Capharnäum of battered and broken utensils, and repaired black crockery, bearing all round its edges, and in every furrow, marks of dirt solidified by time, and which a scrubbing of several hours would not take out, the table and the floor are inundated, not to say drowned, by a brine formed of all kinds of nauseous filth—no pork-butcher's slaughter-house ever presented such a scene of disorder, or such a collection of disgusting objects.

The divinity who presides over this horrible hole is generally a woman. I will not attempt to draw her

portrait, for I should fear, even while remaining far within the limits of truth, to be accused of exaggeration. However, reader, if you should, any evening, enter Paul Niquet's establishment, behind the Halles, at Paris,[1] look around the counter and pick out the woman who is more overcome by liquor than the others; whose tattered faded rags are the dirtiest; whose face is swollen, frayed, and actually shining with the dirt with which it is covered; whose hair is like a lump of horse-hair, through which the comb has never passed, and where countless vermin have firmly established themselves; whose feet are bare, or scarcely covered with shapeless slippers; whose hands are greasy: and you will have discovered an individual something like a Russian cook, whose normal state is one of titubation, which does not always permit her to see her way, or the condition of her saucepans and sauces.

The ceilings, the walls, and the cupboards, are covered with vermin, with which the stoves are swarming, on which you walk, on which you sit down, and which you eat disguised in all the black sauces. The *tarakans* undulate about in every direction, with that dry and almost strident movement which a swarm of cock-chafers shut up in a box would make. It is enough to turn your stomach!

Let us pass on to the dining-room. It is garnished with chairs. In the middle stands a round table. In one corner is a little square table, on which the *kaloua*

[1] The favourite rendezvous of the Parisian market-women.

is served before dinner. The kaloua consists of such articles as salt or pickled fish, caviar, butter, slices of very strong cheese, radish, Russian brandy, etc. Each guest goes up to this table, and helps himself as he stands. Follow well what I say, reader; dinner is laid upon the large table, on which is a glazed cover, or a cloth, that was used, perhaps, in the last century; you are presented with a napkin which has already served some one before you, and will serve others after you, until its colour has totally disappeared beneath a coating of grease. A spoon is placed to the right of the plate, and a fork to the left, the knife being laid horizontally above it. A slice of sticky black bread and a slice of white bread are placed in the plate. There are several jugs full of *kwass* on the table, as well as several kinds of wine, which the Russians take the trouble to colour blue, green, or bright yellow, by means of a mixture of harmless acids. The soup is brought up; it is a very clear and very thin kind of broth, without any addition of bread or thickening. If you should happen to let it get cold, and, while it is doing so, scrutinise it narrowly—you will easily perceive swimming about in it, as I have before said, a whole charnel-house of various insects. After the soup, a joint of beef or veal is placed upon the table, and garnished with potatoes boiled by themselves, or flanked by some other description of vegetable, in a a state of repulsive confusion, which causes you to suspect the existence of very dirty habits in the kitchen. The meat is not cut up in regular joints, as is the case with us.

The reason of this is, that every peasant slaughters his beast, cuts it up into four quarters, and then sells it. In order to obtain a chop, a kidney, or a cutlet, you must purchase a whole quarter of the animal, weighing ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds, and sometimes even more. Salted cucumbers, pickled mushrooms, wild berries, and sour cabbage, are indispensable *hors-d'œuvre* on every table, and served out with the beef, the vegetables, the fish, and the dessert, which invariably consists of cakes that must have been baked in the reign of Peter I. Up to 1840, there had never been a single pastry-cook in St. Petersburg ; and, at the moment I am writing these lines, there is still only one at St. Petersburg, and one at Moscow : there are none to be found anywhere else. On the other hand, however, the Russians have borrowed from Germany and Switzerland, some very skilful confectioners, who make excellent sweetmeats.

After dinner, you withdraw into the saloons, where coffee is handed round, followed, an hour or two afterwards, by tea and sour-milk, and cakes or slices of bread, dried in the oven, and covered with a thin layer of caramel or honey. Tea supplies the place of coffee in the morning, and serves as supper in the evening. True Russians never put the sugar to melt in tea, coffee, or any other beverage ; they nibble a lump of sugar as they drink, and throw back what remains into the sugar-basin. Almost all the men, and the Emperor himself, take their tea in glasses made to withstand boiling water.

V.

Every house possesses an ice-house ; this is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the heaps of provisions of all kinds which people are obliged to have. When a fish or the quarter of an ox is once boiled or roasted, the family live upon it until they come to the bones.

The picture which I have just drawn is only true generally. There are certainly exceptions, but they are not very numerous, and are only to be found in the case of those who have travelled and resided for a lengthened period abroad, or who possess a very large fortune, which enables them to surround themselves with every possible comfort.

In the great families, whose wealth is reckoned by hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling, you meet with luxurious apartments, with waxed and polished floors, with tapestries, perfumes, elegant decorations and ornaments, and with rich Aubusson carpets or velvet hangings before the entrance, while mirrors of a prodigious size, master-pieces of Russian art, are let into the walls, the doors, and the alcoves.

The furniture varies in style, richness, and originality, according to the taste of the master or mistress of the house, or of the Czar. It is Chinese, Indian, English, French, Turkish, Gothic, Renaissance, Rococo, or anything else, according to the taste of the Czar, or

of the Czarina. Before thinking of himself, a person thinks of flattering the Court. When the Grand-Duchess Marie was married to the Prince of Leuchtenberg, every one was seized with a passion for mineralogy, and collected immense heaps of stones of all colours, because it was known that the Prince was greatly distinguished for his knowledge in this branch of science. The Russians do not live for themselves.

Turkey or Persian carpets cover the richly-inlaid floors; statues from Rome or Florence are exhibited in the corners of the saloons, and surrounded by a parterre of shrubs and green plants, in boxes or pots; while richly framed pictures ornament the walls. But, in the midst of all this brilliancy, luxury, and comfort, you can always instinctively feel the existence of the national uncleanliness and bad taste. The various articles I have described are without doubt rich, but they do not agree with each other, and are faded. On going close to all these hangings and wood-work you see the marks of dirty hands and filthy fingers, while the curtains of embossed silk are disfigured by large stains.

The lackeys are supercilious, bold, and deficient in politeness to foreigners. They measure their respect of any one by the amount of gold or silver embroidery, or the number of orders, which decorate his coat. They cringe before embroidery and ribbons, and steal the handkerchiefs, gloves, and other articles which they find in the paletots confided to their care in the antechambers.

It is a difficult thing to convey an idea of the national pride of the Russians; I do not know, in the whole world, a nation with more pretensions. Masters, servants, and slaves, all agree most marvellously in depreciating everything which is not Russian. If you point out the absurdity of this by asking why they buy English and French productions, and why they eat like Englishmen or Frenchmen, they reply, without the slightest embarrassment, that they do so because fashion requires it. I have even met with some individuals, perfectly educated, who had travelled, and who, putting all national *amour-propre* aside, could appreciate, better than the rest of their countrymen, the people and products of each particular nation; I have, I will add, met people who bore celebrated names, and in both cases found many who have actually asserted, with the greatest sincerity and good faith, that the discourses and sermons of our greatest preachers, such as Masillon and others, were far better when translated into Russian than they were in the original French, because they had been retouched by the translators!

# THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS I.

## I.

The Emperor Nicholas is assuredly the most honest man in his empire, just as he is the handsomest, the most just, the most humane, and the most intelligent. He commands the respect and esteem of all who surround him, or who have the honour to approach him, less by the sacred character with which he is invested, than by the rare and great qualities for which he is distinguished. As a friend, as a father, and as a husband, he is a perfect model of domestic virtue.

Exactly in the same degree that he is generous, indulgent, and humane, with regard to the errors caused by the wild impetuosity of youth, is he implacable to those propagators of theories who expose the people to the disorders and shocks which for the last four years have kept all Europe in commotion. For such men he is without mercy, and without pity; he punishes without holding out the slightest hope of pardon.

Among the boyars of his court, there are some few friends of his childhood, whom he loves with the

fanaticism of the warmest friendship, and by whom, in turn, he is loved with the most unlimited devotion and disinterestedness. When the man is transformed into the Emperor, all bow and incline respectfully before him. When he again changes into the man, he is, in the fullest acceptation of the word, a gentleman, and invariably kind friend.

Twice a-year, on New Year's Day and on the Fête-day of the Empress, the doors of the imperial palace are thrown open to such as have obtained beforehand tickets of admission, when soldiers, courtiers, merchants, and moujicks, in their national dress, mingle together. The aristocracy, the diplomatic body, the foreigners, who have received invitations, and the common people admitted to the fête, are introduced promiscuously in the grand apartments, where all have to wait, pressed upon by the crowd, for the appearance of the Emperor, and of the imperial family. His commanding figure is at length seen towering above the ocean of heads that surround him—the crowd opens before him, and he advances, followed by his noble retinue. He walks freely, and even without experiencing the slightest inconvenience from the mass of people, through closely-packed rooms, where an instant before one would not have believed another person could have penetrated. As soon as he disappears, the crowd of peasants closes behind him, like the ripple on the water that follows in the track of a ship.

He loves and reveres the companion of his life; he adores and idolises his children, and is never more



THE CZAR AND THE CZARINA.

happy than when in the midst of them, playing at all sorts of innocent games with some, and teasing the others with the most innocent jokes.

Endowed with robust health and iron energy, he is indefatigable in his labours, and tires out his ministers and secretaries with work. He is the first to rise, and the last to retire to rest, and devotes his whole time and solicitude to the administration of his vast empire. He superintends everything—the army, the finances, the navy, trade and agriculture—endeavouring to introduce zeal and probity into every department, without ever being successful. The disease of venality under which the empire is suffering is too far spread; there his autocracy is vanquished.

Emperor and Czar, invested with triple power, he looks upon himself as a man charged by Providence with a divine mission, which he endeavours to fulfil with remarkable intelligence, and with the energy of an honest man who knows exactly the object he has in view.

It would be as odious as unjust to refuse the Emperor Nicholas the praise really due to him, because he dedicates all his energy towards extending the political influence of his country. If he governs his people with the roughness and severity which we have described, and preserves in his empire a body of laws and a state of things stamped with barbarism and cruelty, it is because he knows that his people, with whom he is better acquainted than any one else, is incapable of living under a regimen more in harmony

with the precepts of the Gospel. We have already said in a former portion of our work, that the instant Russian law ceases to strike and crush like the thunderbolt, the moment it ceases to inspire terror, Russia will be covered with ruins and with blood. We saw, when speaking of the military colonies of the Volkoff, of what excesses the nation is capable.

II.

The Emperor has endeavoured to do, and has really effected, all the good he could, but always with great prudence. That the good is not more evident, we must blame his aristocracy alone, who at all times has offered the most violent opposition, and obliged him to pursue a retrograde course.

The existence of this man of genius has, ever since his accession to the throne, been nought save one continual struggle with the venality and corruption which crush his empire, for his penetration had discerned the evil long before it was pointed out to him. On one occasion, he resolved to probe this evil with all the energy of an honest heart. He charged two intelligent men belonging to his staff of secretaries—two Germans from Courland, in whom he placed implicit confidence—to investigate most thoroughly all the branches of the public administration; to observe, to see, to judge everything for themselves, and boldly to take the soundings of this ocean of corruption, however deep it might be. The will of the Czar is law,

and is, I fearlessly assert, often attended with beneficial results. The task was no easy one; thousands of obstacles were shattered to pieces and overcome. The work was long; and, contrary to his expectations, conscientious. It is true, that it would not have been easy to disguise the evil. The portrait was not flattered. Instances of bribery, shuffling and venality were pointed out to the Czar without any respect for persons. Names were written in full, and proofs were abundant. The sore gaped as wide as a gulf. Punishment was out of the question, for it would have been necessary to let the knout fall upon the noblest shoulders in his empire, and his vengeance almost everywhere—to open the gates of Siberia to the majority of those who surrounded him—for, figuratively speaking, the very doors of his palace threatened to fall, eaten away with corruption! The Czar shed a tear or two, and threw the report into the fire. In a country of this kind, justice, before being severe, must be prudent.

The very same evening, weighed down with grief, he went, according to his usual custom, to the house of one of his favourite ministers, Count ——. The sombre, discontented air of the Autocrat, completely stupified the mind of the favourite, who, in a stammering voice, plucked up sufficient courage to ask his august master what had occurred to affect his mind to such a degree, and stamp upon his face the marks of such profound sadness. The Czar, with that sharp, abrupt tone, for which he is celebrated, related to his minister-general all he had just learned, told him the

revelations recently made, and exclaimed with concentrated indignation :—

"Everyone robs throughout the empire! Everyone around me robs! In whatever direction I choose to glance, I behold only pilferers and robbers! There is only one person, a single one, who can walk proudly with head erect. Of this person, at least, I am sure," he added, looking at his favourite very fixedly and very strangely.

Count ——, imagining that the Emperor was alluding to him, bowed and bent himself almost to the ground, in order to thank his most august master for having had the goodness to think him an honest servant.

But the Czar, striking his breast, added the following words:—

"And that person who does not rob is myself! I am the only person throughout the empire who does not steal!"

III.

This struggle of the good with the bad, always kept up by the Emperor with a degree of ardour and courage often amounting to temerity, has more than once nearly cost him his life. We must not forget that, when a Czar becomes troublesome, he is either poisoned, or killed by the cord or the sword, if not by means still more atrocious, for Russian genius is very fertile in inventions of this description. We have the example of Paul's death to prove this.

As we have before said, the revolution of February, 1848, was a stroke of fortune for the Czar. But for that, it is highly probable that he would have fallen under the blows of his malignant and perfidious aristocracy, among whose number there are still, at the moment of our writing these lines, several of the murderers of his father. He owes his safety to the fear which the socialist theories inspired, and still inspire. Since 1839, the nobility has been endeavouring to get rid of the Czar; ten times, perhaps, has he been on the point of being struck, and ten times have his audacity and his *sang-froid* saved him.

Among the conspirators were, and still are, members of his household, whom he was loading every day with marks of his kindness.

To conspire at St. Petersburg, under the eyes of the Czar, or even at Moscow, the refuge of all discontented and offended spirits, would have been rather too dangerous. The conspirators arranged their plans abroad, in Italy, France, and Switzerland, but principally in Germany, at a watering-place, where they agreed to meet, ostensibly for the sake of their health. At this period, travelling-permits and passports were easily obtained,—in fact, they were never refused. At the watering-place in question, the conspirators could plot freely, secure from all danger. They arranged their plans, and disposed of the lives of the Czar and his young family with the same indifference as if they had been projecting a party of pleasure. Among the most active members of this strange band of conspirators,

were persons occupying high offices in the state, superior officers of the army, equerries, chamberlains, and senators, some being of pure Russian extraction, and others Courlanders, Livonians, and Esthonians. In order to speak more freely of the actions and conduct of the Czar, without attracting anybody's attention, they designated him by a nickname that was almost ignoble, and all that had been said, done, and agreed on, while they were taking the waters, was reported, with the greatest exactitude, to the brethren and friends who had remained in Russia.

Up to 1839, or 1840, at which period the feeling of discontent began to grow very strong, it had never been seriously resolved, at least as far as I am aware, that the Czar should perish. The feudal aristocracy felt neither sufficiently powerful nor sufficiently popular to risk such a measure, and already dreaded the tchinn. They had allowed him to give himself the airs of an autocrat, and it was too late to oblige him to quit them (we are citing the very words which issued from Russian lips). But they did not, on this account, abandon their plans; they speculated on the Czarovitch's accession to the throne; they knew that he was a weak-minded person; they discussed the guarantees which they should insist on his granting, and the probable results of an act obtained by force; they took into consideration every possible eventuality, and without altogether renouncing all idea of committing a crime, they were fatally impelled towards it. For, supposing even that the Czarovitch had consented to sign

an act of indemnity under the pressure of his boyars, it is very improbable that, once master of the government and the army, and seconded besides by his brothers, especially the Grand-Duke Constantine, a man of remarkable energy, he would not immediately have endeavoured to free himself from it. In such a case, therefore, to avoid perishing in Siberia, or the Caucasus, on the scaffold, or in some other manner, the nobility would inevitably be obliged to have recourse to the three traditional methods of their country: poison, the cord, or the pressure of a muscular hand—and include in one act of extermination all the members of the imperial family.

## IV.

In 1839, St. Petersburg, Moscow, and all the large cities of the empire, were suddenly thrown into a state of terrible anxiety. A strange rumour circulated in every family, and people whispered to one another that, in the silence of his study, the Emperor was preparing the emancipation of all the serfs. The aristocracy, taken unawares, trembled for its privileges, its property, its riches, and even its life; for, in Russia, a liberal measure is almost always followed by a revolt, and the nobles have so many sins upon their conscience to answer for! All of a sudden, a ukase appeared! It merely contained a clause authorising and rendering mutually binding, every farming lease contracted voluntarily between a noble and his serf. This was a step

towards liberty. The attempt was a bold one, however, for, up to that time, the peasant did not even possess the right of disposing of his intelligence, being debarred from entering into any contract whatever.[1]

This measure, although marked with deep wisdom, was not attended with the slightest success: not that it was misunderstood by the serfs, but because, knowing the value of the promises made them by their masters, they did not relish the liberty offered, and flatly refused it. In their eyes, it was but another form, in virtue of which the boyars might odiously use them to their own advantage. Besides, in case of a dispute, by whom and how would justice be awarded? This was something that the ukase did not tell them, and the unhappy serfs were already too well acquainted with the venality of their magistrates and of their country.

And yet this liberty of making an agreement granted to these thirty or forty millions of slaves, was intended to deliver them from the tyranny of the stewards, and even of the nobles themselves, since, through it, instead of being mere ploughs, they were transformed into agriculturists.

This ukase, which had made so much noise, excited so much rage, and, for a moment, shaken the whole social system, sank back into nothingness. Fortunately, the mountain had only brought forth a mouse. But the blow had been given. Every malignant passion was strengthened, and, if its courage had not

[1] See, in the chapter on "Slavery," p. 147, some of the articles of the Russian code.

failed, the aristocracy would have exterminated the imperial family.

V.

The marriage of the Grand-Duchess Marie, and the Duke de Leuchtenberg, was a fresh motive for discontent and hatred. There was not one of the ostentatious boyars, who did not look upon himself as of a better family than a Prince de Beauharnais, and all of them treasured up a feeling of deep vengeance against the Emperor for having proved himself the best of fathers, and for having, in this alliance, consulted only the heart and the happiness of his child. Did he chance to have a palace built for his daughter? They vociferated loudly and perseveringly that he was ruining Russia. Did he appoint his son-in-law to the colonelcy of a regiment? Their outcries became doubly violent, and they went so far as to say that he was a *sans-culotte*, making a pun upon the word. Even the children, playing the part of echoes to their relations, never spoke of the Prince but in an affected tone of contempt.

It was during this period, extending from 1839 to 1840, that the Emperor threw down the gauntlet a hundred times to his nobility, and treated it with so much disdain and haughtiness as would lead any one to suppose that he was acquainted with its dark plots and projects. It seemed as if he wished to drive it to extremities by various measures, each of which successively narrowed its privileges. He wounded it in its pride, by

opening the gates of the university, of the public schools, and of all the branches of the administration of the Empire, to every individual who presented himself, whether the son of a tradesman or of an emancipated serf. Mons. de Custine's book was published, and met with a brilliant reception; the Emperor publicly purchased a great number of copies, as much as to say to his nobles: "See how well this writer has appreciated and judged you!" The revolution of February, I again repeat, was an unexpected miracle of Providence, a miracle which saved the Czar, and perhaps Russia as well, from a terrible catastrophe.

During these nine years, he was constantly in danger. All persons expected, nearly every day, to hear that he had perished by a violent death, which would, inevitably, be followed by a revolt of the army. Two parties would then have stood face to face: the Feudal Nobility and the Tchinn. The first impulse of the Russian peasant who has revolted, is to massacre the nobles and the foreigners; that of the soldier is to kill and exterminate his officers and every one who is German, under which name he confounds the natives of almost every nation. The principal foreigners residing at St. Petersburg, had, in expectation of some event of the kind, taken measures for escaping and gaining Finland. It is exactly from this epoch that we date the introduction into Russia of decked boats, and the foundation of boating clubs, the members of which, under pretence of learning how to manage their craft, used to go and make themselves acquainted with

the navigation about Cronstadt, in order, as I have just said, to gain the islands with which the coast of Finland is constellated, and whence they could reach Sweden without the least danger.

## VI.

Like Janus, the Czar has two faces, the one smiling and gracious, and the other severe and harsh. The first is kept for his home, his moujicks, who adore him, and the artists and scholars that he is always pleased to see and meet upon his way: the second is for his boyars, his army, and especially for the persons employed in the various branches of the administration of his empire. He drives almost always alone, unless when accompanied by one of his sons, in a carriage or a sledge, through the streets of his capital, and nothing can be more curious than to observe the play of his features. If he answers, on his right, the salute of an officer or a soldier, of a boyar or of a tradesman, his face is severe and his look almost terrible; but if his attention is immediately afterwards attracted to his left, by a group of foreigners or artists, the expression of his physiognomy is softened down, and instead of placing his hand, in military fashion, on a level with his hat, he waves it graciously.

His costume is invariable, being always that of a superior officer. Nothing distinguishes him particularly from the officers of his army, unless it is his tall

figure and handsome, manly face. He does not allow any of his officers to dress in plain clothes, and only assumes them himself when abroad.

The Emperor Nicholas has inherited the antipathy and hatred of his ancestors for beards and long hair. Except his coachmen, whom he chooses from among the most blackly-bearded individuals in his empire; all persons connected with the civil administration are obliged to shave off every particle of hair on their faces. The army alone wears the moustache and imperial. The nobility and free citizens may wear whiskers, but only as far as on a level with the bottom of the ear. The Czar himself personally watches over, besides causing others to do the same, the scrupulous observance of these regulations.

He has an equal horror of those dandies, to be found in every country, who think it the *acmè* of good taste to ape the manners, customs, absurdities, and eccentricities of every nation but their own.

One day, as he was passing along the Newski Perspective, his glance happened to fall, by the merest accident, on a young man whom he took to be an Englishman of the first water. This individual's face was covered by thick whiskers of an extraordinary length, half curled, and a moustache twisted up at the ends, like fish-hooks, while half his head was imprisoned in a prodigiously eccentric shirt collar. He had got on a checked costume, peculiarly English, with a plaid round his shoulders, and a Scotch bonnet upon his head. At first, the Czar did not recognize

him, but, taking him for a tourist, passed on without paying any more attention. The next day, this strangely-costumed personage again came under his observation, and the Czar thought he recognized one of his boyars. He stopt his sledge and made a sign for him to approach. As may be supposed, the young boyar waited for the invitation to be repeated, for fear he might have been mistaken. But, being directly pointed out by the Czar's finger, he was under the necessity of answering the summons, and walked up tremblingly to the Czar, who said drily, making room for him: "Take a seat, sir!" Every one, seeing the Emperor pass with Count —— at his side, asked himself, how in the name of Heaven the latter had succeeded in placing himself on so intimate a footing with the Czar. Never, till that day, had his Majesty been seen driving out with a favourite. This departure from courtly routine formed the subject of every one's conversation, and of endless commentaries, all the rest of the day. Could it be a tribute of respect, which his Majesty thus publicly rendered to the taste and manners of this young Muscovite, disguised like an Englishman? Such might be the case, and as, in Russia, the courtiers are the slaves of the sovereign's slightest caprices, they began making every preparation for imitating the fashionable appearance which Count —— had imported with such fortunate results.

At the expiration of an hour, the Emperor drove back to the Danitschkoff Palace, where the imperial

family have resided since the Winter Palace was burnt down. He himself introduced the fashionable Muscovite into the saloons of the Empress, to whom he presented him, saying in the most easy and good-humoured manner:

"Here, Madame Nicholas," for it is thus he names the Empress in the intimacy of private life, "I present to you one of our most faithful subjects. Look at him closely. Do you not know him? Well, there is nothing astonishing in that. He has, for the last few years, been travelling in France and England, and this is the horrible condition in which he has returned to us."

Then, turning towards Count ——, who was struck dumb with terror and stupifaction, he said to him:

"You may retire, but let me beg of you to shave and become a true Russian as formerly. Remember, that it is more honourable to remain one of your own country, than to ape the absurdities of foreign nations."

The same evening, the adventure was known in all the drawing-rooms of the capital, to the great amusement of everybody.

VII.

The Emperor Nicholas is radically good, just, and humane. More than one foreigner owes him his fortune, while more than one officer of his army owes him his life, and, what is of still greater account, his honour.

As I have said in one of the preceding chapters, it often happens that the contents of the strongbox of a regiment are squandered away at some orgy or other. The unfortunate wretch, who has thus forgotten his duty, and possesses neither property of his own nor relations to make up the deficiency, has no resource left but the truly paternal goodness of the Czar. A young officer, bearing one of the most illustrious names in Russia, had lost all his patrimony in a gambling-house. Impelled by his love of play, and, perhaps, by the hopes of recovering his fortune, he had risked the money belonging to his regiment upon the green table, and once again lost. There were four courses open to him: suicide, degradation, Siberia, and the Emperor. He proceeded to the palace, and confided to the aide-de-camp in waiting the request he wished the latter to convey to his Majesty. As soon as the Czar heard the first few words pronounced by his aide-de-camp, he hastily exclaimed: "Enough, enough, sir! do not pronounce his name, for, if I knew it, I ought to punish him"—then, opening a drawer in his bureau, and taking out thirty thousand roubles, he added: "There,

give him that, and do not let the matter ever be mentioned to me again."

VIII.

A thousand similar traits are to be found in the life of the Emperor Nicholas. His solicitude extends even to the foreigners residing in his empire. Never was it more evident, as far as Frenchmen are concerned, than after the revolution of February, 1848. The French embassy no longer existed. The Chargé d'Affaires had sent in his resignation and quitted Russia. Nothing remained at St. Petersburg but a staff of subordinates in a state of the greatest disorder. The Emperor gave orders that all the principal French residents of the capital should be requested to appear at the office of the minister of police, where, after having informed them of the events that were taking place in France, the minister told them that his Majesty took them under his especial protection, and that they might, without any anxiety, pursue their various labours, trades, and professions, as heretofore. He added that passports would be delivered to those whose interests recalled them to their native country. They were, also, requested to abstain in public, or before Russians, from all conversation of a political character, as every one infringing this order would be immediately expelled the country, without any hope of being allowed to return.

I regret being compelled to say, that they did not all prove grateful for this act of kindness on the part of the

Emperor. Several of them stupidly endeavoured to propagate their political opinions, and were conducted to the frontiers. I know no persons more insupportable and arrogant than a certain class of my compatriots when abroad. Endowed with an excessive dose of pride and national *amour-propre,* they treat as savages the nation with whom they live, and to whom they have come for the purpose of forwarding their own interests. They are always instituting comparisons between their native country and that in which they are hospitably welcomed. I have met with some Frenchmen, in Russia, who pushed their impertinence so far as to think it extraordinary that all Russians did not speak French.

On receiving intelligence of the revolutions at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Frankfort, etc., the Czar immediately gave orders that all the frontiers of his empire, both by land and sea, should be hermetically closed. He established a sanitary chain of Cossacks round Russia, and isolated it more completely, perhaps, from the rest of Europe, than China itself. The newspapers, however, were still allowed to enter; but, before being distributed, they passed under the scissors of the censors, who lacerated them without pity. The persons intrusted with this task, trembled daily for their liberty. A single line of politics overlooked was sufficient to conduct them to Siberia. As a natural consequence, they tolerated only the literary articles, the price of stocks, the advertisements, and the miscellaneous news. One day, I happened to say to an official

that it would be better to stop the papers altogether than to mutilate them in such a manner. "That would never do," he replied; "we would rather *reprint* them here."

## IX.

Without entirely sharing the prejudices of his people, the Emperor is, nevertheless, irresistibly swayed by the idea of fatalism. The following anecdote is a proof of this. Every morning, he causes all the franked letters which have been sent by post (for he never receives any personally) to be brought to him; he has them then read by his secretary, and classifies them all in his prodigious memory. One day, while thus engaged, he suddenly recollected a plan which had been forwarded to him the evening previous, and which he had placed in his bureau. Not being able to lay his hand upon it, he commenced looking about with impatience. During this time, the secretary continued reading, and, to each of the letters, the Czar replied: "*Refused.*" Some dozen requests had met with this fate, when the Czar found the plan. From that moment, to each of the rest, he replied: "*Granted.*"

When the secretary had concluded his task, he aid:

"Would your Majesty allow me to make an observation?"

"Certainly; speak," replied the Emperor.

"Just now, Sire, your Majesty was searching for a

plan. Under the influence of the vexation which your Majesty appeared to experience at not finding it, you refused some dozen requests—if your Majesty would permit me to read them again, perhaps among the number there might be some deserving of your kindness."

"Ah! true!" replied the Czar, "you do well to remind me of the circumstance;" then suddenly correcting himself, he added, with an inspired air, "But no—no, I refused to grant them—it was the will of God—it was fated to happen so; I have, doubtless, judged them rightly, and I maintain what I have said."

## X.

Up to the present time, the Emperor Nicholas has been visibly protected by Providence. He has enjoyed the most complete domestic happiness that it ever fell to the lot of a human being to know. Father of a numerous family, he has had the rare good fortune of seeing it grow up, and of keeping it near his own person. He has been successful in the government of his vast empire. This extraordinary man seems to be beyond the reach of misfortune. But there is, however, one black spot in his existence which exasperates him: he cannot resist the effects of the sea! What is most extraordinary, too, is that he has never embarked in a Russian bark or ship, for a pleasure trip or a voyage, without being assailed by the most horrible tempests,

or winds violent enough to sink the strongest ship. Tossed about, shattered, disfigured and almost broken to pieces, the vessels on board of which he has been, have, in spite of all this, succeeded in reaching port. But does not this perseverance on the part of fate to pursue him, this furious commotion of the ocean, whenever he has had to traverse it, seem like an energetic protestation on the part of Neptune against the favourite whim of the Russian government to create a navy?

This fact is so well known to Russians, that none of the members of his family or his household ever like to accompany him; they only do so with the greatest reluctance. He knows the repugnance of his favourites for a voyage or pleasure trip by sea, and takes a malicious delight in ordering the attendance of those who are the most timid.

Half his life may truly be said to have been spent upon the high roads of his vast empire, and those of Europe. He likes to travel fast. In Russia, when sledging has once really commenced, he never goes at a rate of less than four leagues an hour. This extraordinary speed has caused him more than one fall, and more than one accident. On one occasion, for instance, between Moscow and Novgorod, his sledge, being run away with by some fiery horses of the Steppes, capsized in a deep ravine, and the Czar was taken up with a broken clavicle.

## XI.

Whenever the Emperor Nicholas is called upon to administer justice, his decisions are stamped with the most religious impartiality. In one of the early years of his reign, a young girl of illustrious family became deeply enamoured of a young officer of the noble-guards. As the consent which she solicited was refused with a degree of obstinacy that was perfectly unjustifiable, she fled from the paternal roof, and got secretly married. She was a minor; and her family, which was the most important in the province, as much by the austerity of its morals, as by its immense fortune, and the influence derived from science, merit, and a high official position, demanded the punishment of the seducer. It required the most terrible chastisements—the knout, the whip, the rod, or, at least, Siberia—in a word, nothing was horrible enough in its eyes for so atrocious a case. The Czar would not listen to all these complaints. A scandalous offence had, it is true, been committed, but it had been instantly atoned for. Besides, the young man was of as good a family as his youthful bride, and the Czar thought that they ought to be left alone. The complaints and clamour of the family, however, increased, until, at last, the Czar, whose patience was completely exhausted, replied personally to the mother of the young bride:—"Well then, Madam, be it so; I will punish them, I will make an example. The young

count shall go and find a certain death in the army of the Caucasus, and your daughter shall be sent to end her days in a convent." This menace, which he most certainly did not intend to put into execution, had all the success he expected, nor did he cease to exert himself until he had prevailed upon the young lady's family to pardon and forget her error.

## XII.

The court frequently visits the theatre in winter. The Emperor passes an hour or two there every evening. He is particularly fond of the Italian opera and the French plays, for which he makes enormous sacrifices. His great pleasure, between the acts, is to go down upon the stage and talk to the members of the company, men as well as women, always exquisitely polite to the former, and amiably gallant to the latter. Being himself naturally very simple in his taste and demeanour, he desires that every one else should be natural, without affectation. He likes to awe persons, and is himself the first to laugh at the awkwardness and constraint felt by strangers in his presence. For instance, going one day unexpectedly on the stage of the French theatre, he found all the actresses in groups, mutually backbiting one another. Immediately they perceived him, they fell into a line, like soldiers presenting arms, and made a profound curtsey, which struck him as so comical, that, to amuse himself a little at their expense, he placed himself before them, and

taking hold of the two skirts of his uniform surtout, returned their salute with a smile; he then went up and talked to them some time with the greatest kindness.

All dramatic artists who leave Russia after a stay of ten years, have a pension of eighty pounds each, out of his own privy purse. More than one mediocre actor is indebted to him for an easy and certain competency in his old age.

## XIII.

He speaks French admirably, and is thoroughly acquainted with all the niceties of the language. Formerly he used to take a pleasure in making *bons-mots* and other kinds of jokes, but, although very clever in this respect, his brother, the Grand-Duke Michael, was far superior to him. He used to make them on every possible occasion, even in the midst of a serious conversation. There is not a single boyar admitted to the court in 1839, who does not recollect the famous pun that he made upon his own niece, the Grand-Duchess Marie, the evening of the day on which she was married to the Duke of Leuchtenberg.

The Empress is no whit inferior to the Emperor in goodness of heart and elevation of soul. She possesses, in the highest degree, every feminine virtue. As a wife, she loves the Emperor beyond expression. Endowed with profound good sense, and with a rare spirit of penetration, she is, so to speak, a tutelary

angel, around whom all who are unhappy collect, in order to obtain favours, or a commutation of the severe sentences of her husband. The Emperor is fond of yielding to the gentle influence exercised over him by his wife, and it is very seldom, unless in instances of the most atrocious crime, that she does not obtain forgetfulness of the past, or at least a mitigation of the punishment. All the benefits that she has conferred, and still confers, remain unknown; she never profanes them by publishing them to the world, and the unhappy beings whom she saves, or whom she succours, have not to blush at their misery or their misfortunes.

She accepts, and even eagerly seeks, the office of patroness of all works of charity. She knows that good deeds done by those in high stations, always meet with numerous imitators.

In 1848, when the cholera was ravaging the city, she displayed a far greater amount of courage than is natural to her sex. Two or three thousand victims fell every day struck down by the plague. Terror was painted on every face, and despair planted in every heart. The city was deserted, and all the public offices abandoned. In less than four days applications were made for more than eighty thousand passports. The nobility had fled, and even the persons connected with the court requested to leave. The streets were strewed with corpses, and encumbered with dying persons. The Czarina preserved all her courage and energy. She was to be seen everywhere, accompanied by the princesses, restoring every one's courage by her own ex-

ample. The Czar, on his side, used to traverse the city on foot, accompanied by his sons, and followed by some few aides-de-camp who had not dared to flee. He visited all the hospitals and all the barracks, making it a point to go into the quarters which had suffered most, nor did he withdraw to his summer residence, the Palace of Czarsko-Selo, until the city was, so to speak, almost abandoned. We can safely affirm that not more than a hundred thousand souls, including the garrison, were left within the walls. Three hundred and fifty thousand had retired into the country.

For several years past, the Czarina has been in a very delicate and unsettled state of health. More than once have the medical men of the country despaired of preserving her for her numerous and fine family, whom she idolises, and all of whom—sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren—assemble around her every evening. The son-in-law, also, whom she has just lost, and whom she used to love as much as her own sons, was very assiduous in his attendance at these meetings.

# APPENDIX.

## A.

THE letters of all foreigners residing in Russia are invariably opened, examined, and read, both on being sent off and on being received, by the post-office authorities. Any one who is unfortunately so imprudent as to relate the impressions produced upon him in the course of his travels through the country, or who maintains with persons abroad a correspondence which the Russian police look upon as dangerous, is quickly conducted to the frontier, with all the respect due to him according to the rank he holds in the social hierarchy.

Some years ago, Mons. V., the brother of one of our most valiant superior officers, happened to be at St. Petersburg. He had been stopping there above a fortnight, going about everywhere and observing everything, when one morning, a police officer entered his room and asked if it was Mons. V. to whom he had the honour of speaking. On the latter answering in the affirmative, the officer continued:

"His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, having

learned *indirectly* that you keep up with your brother an active correspondence, in which you give him your own peculiar views of the affairs of this country, charges me to inform you that, as your letters might be lost upon the road, he thinks it would be more prudent for you to take them to Paris yourself. Here are your letters; a carriage and horses are waiting for you at the door. I have, also, a passport, perfectly correct, to give you. In two hours your trunks will be packed and we will set out."

This ironical manner of expelling people did not surprise Mons. V., for he was aware that it was a custom of the Russian police, and he replied therefore in the same tone to the officer:

"His Majesty anticipates my wishes; I was on the point of leaving his dominions, but I had indulged in the hope of not taking my departure until I had seen the Czar of all the Russias. I confess that I shall regret all my life not having time to do so."

"For the matter of that, sir," replied the police-officer, "while *we* are preparing your trunks, I will despatch some one to learn his Majesty's orders."

Speaking thus, he wrote a few lines on a page of his note-book, and sent them off by a Cossack who had accompanied him, and who is the indispensable acolyte of every officer charged with a mission of this description. Half an hour afterwards, the Cossack returned with the same note, at the bottom of which were two lines, traced by the hand of the Emperor himself, to the following effect: "Granted. To-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, in the Michael Riding-school: the carriage will follow you."

The officer left Mons. V. to himself for the rest of the day, and returned to fetch him the next morning at half-past nine. In a moment, the baggage was stowed away, and Mons. V. and his *cicerone* directed their course towards the riding-school. The Emperor was already there, inspecting a regiment of infantry. He passed several times before Mons. V., who was standing in the midst of a group of general officers. When the review was over, Mons. V. and his companion got into their carriage again, and drove off at a gallop, whirled along by four little horses of the Steppes, harnessed abreast.

On their reaching the frontier, the portcullis was raised to allow free passage to a carriage with the arms of the Czar upon it, and, fifty paces further on, Mons. V. was set down with all his baggage before the Prussian barrier, in the middle of the road, at one o'clock of a bitterly cold morning in the month of November. The officer said that his Majesty only undertook the responsibility of such journeys as far as the frontiers of his dominions, and that at present Mons. V. must look to the King of Prussia for the means of pursuing his journey to France.

B.

By the grace of God, we, ALEXANDER THE FIRST, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, etc., etc., to all our faithful subjects:

The whole world is acquainted with the disastrous events occasioned by the avidity and ambition of the government which at present weighs on France. It has covered Europe with carnage, crimes, and ruins. We desired to put a limit to this. We have employed every means of conciliation to restore general tranquillity and secure the independence of our allies. But all our efforts, all our solicitude, has remained without effect.

The common enemy, whose perfidy tramples under foot the sacredness of treaties and the laws of nations, and whose encroachments threaten to throw all Europe into confusion, obliged us to have recourse to arms in order to assist the Powers neighbouring on our empire.

The misfortunes which have accumulated over Austria, forced the court of Vienna to sign an onerous peace, dictated by the urgent nature of the circumstances and the ambitious views of the conqueror.

A short time afterwards, at the very moment that there were hopes of putting an end to this plague, and, by means of negociations, restoring repose to groaning humanity, Prussia, falling a victim to the sacrifices she had made in order to procure the friendship of France, and also to her condescension towards this enemy of the whole world, was not able to escape the dangers of war.

The security which she enjoyed in the midst of a deceptive peace, without foreseeing the results of it, and the confidence which she never ceased to place in the perfidious friend who betrayed while he caressed, have dug the abyss into which she has just been precipitated.

Before the forces of Prussia could be collected, the armies of Bonaparte, falling upon them, conquered and dispersed them. The capital of the kingdom, having been left without defence, was subsequently taken possession of, and the greater portion of the Prussian provinces fell into the power of the French.

The moment this barrier, which covered our western frontiers, was thus thrown down, we saw ourselves imperiously compelled to cause our armies to advance under the orders of Field-Marshal Count Caminski, in order to protect this side of our dominions, and, after having invoked the Almighty, by whose means, sooner or later, the just cause must triumph, we have commanded our troops to advance against the enemy, who, in audacious proclamations, dares to threaten that he will march his armies into the very heart of our empire.

As the advantages which Napoleon has gained over our neighbours cause all the weight of this war to fall upon our native land, one of our first duties was to redouble our paternal cares for the maintenance of the tranquillity and security of the state, by supporting our armies with all the united strength of the brave, faithful, and generous people, the government of whom Providence has confided to our care.

The disasters which, with such astonishing rapidity,

have overwhelmed the neighbouring states, prove more than ever how indispensable it is to unite all the resources offered us by unflinching courage and the love of our country and of glory.

It is only when the whole of a great people is inflamed with these noble sentiments that it can, by a general arming, oppose an impenetrable barrier to its enemies, whatever may be their number and strength.

The fact of not having taken up arms in this manner, even in the hearts of the provinces, in order to repel the chief of the French, whose power was augmented by each fresh act of usurpation, was a fault which has been attended with unfortunate results for Austria, and one which has accelerated the downfall of Prussia. The loss of a few battles has been sufficient to decide their fate. The enemy, penetrating into their country without having anything to fear from an unarmed population, have destroyed the remains of the dispersed and routed troops, and, carrying terror and desolation every where, have multiplied their easy invasions and put the finishing stroke to their acts of usurpation.

The valour and the triumphs of the Russian armies, the intrepidity with which, during a century, they have overthrown their enemies in all quarters of the earth, the trophies raised upon the frontiers, which they have never ceased extending, and the recollection of so much glory, all tend to assure us that, with the aid of the Supreme Being, our enemies will fail in their ambitious designs, and leave upon our soil no traces save their graves.

But the immense extent of country, over which our

armies are called upon to act, presents great obstacles to their mutually assisting one another in the defence of our vast frontiers; therefore, to prevent the dangers which might result from this, especially if (which God forbid) the enemy succeeded in effecting a breach in them, we have deemed it indispensable to take measures, for a time, for a general arming of the population, and to create a militia which will be always ready to proceed rapidly to every spot, and to reinforce, or supply the place of, the regular armies, and, in a word, be able to oppose each step of the French with the insurmountable force of the faithful children of our native country, united for the defence of all they hold most dear and most precious.

Under these difficult circumstances, we address ourselves with the most boundless confidence to the illustrious body of the nobility of our empire, which by its constant fidelity, by its numerous and important services on the field of battle, and the generous sacrifice of its blood and fortune, formerly laid the unshakeable foundation of the greatness of Russia; that body whose heroic example has animated and guided the other classes of the state, who by their brilliant actions have, at all times, contributed to the defence of their fatherland and the foundation of its glory.

The ever memorable proofs which the nobility has always given of its devotion to its fatherland and of its fidelity to the throne, in the earliest ages as well as at the present day, its well known readiness to respond on all occasions to the first summons of its sovereign[1] whenever its services

[1] Letters of Nobility, § 20.

may prove useful, and to sacrifice its exertions and its life to the necessities of the state, afford the convincing assurances of the zeal, devotion, and perseverance with which it will assist us in bringing to a successful termination, and accelerating the aforesaid arming of the militia, required by the necessities and for the safety of the empire, conforming itself, also, to the rules here following.

We are persuaded that our faithful corporations of cities, that the class of nobles and tradesmen, that the peasants of the crown and the free husbandmen, will vie with each other in uniting to share the honourable burden of rendering the most important service to their fatherland, as well as defending the religion of their forefathers and the prosperity of their families.

Let the ministers of the altars join with us and our faithful subjects, in praying to the Almighty, who holds in His hands the fate of empires, and in obtaining from Him the protection and strength necessary to resist the danger, to vanquish and exterminate the common enemy, and to restore peace and repose to our people.

The organisation of the provincial armament or the raising of the militia, which will only remain in force during the present danger, will be conducted in the following manner:—

### I. FORMATION AND ARMING OF THE MILITIA.

1. All the governments situated towards the frontiers or in the interior of the empire, and which will be hereafter specified, will arm their respective populations, according

to the number prescribed for the militia levies, agreeably to the annexed regulations.

2. Several governments comprised in the list, and united with one another, will form a general district, and the forces raised by these governments will form the militia of each such district.

3. The number of such armies will be seven.

4. The commanders-in-chief of the general districts will be appointed and chosen by us, from among those persons who have gained general confidence by their fidelity, their services, and their personal qualities.

5. The commanders of the bodies of militia of the governments will be appointed by the nobility, who will choose for the post such persons as have distinguished themselves by their military services, and who, as far as this is possible, are domiciliated in the respective governments. If the nobility does not elect them, they will be appointed by the commander-in-chief of the general district.

6. The other officers of the militia of the governments, such as the commandants of districts, of one thousand men, of five hundred, and of less, will also be named by the nobility of the government, who will appoint members of its own class, and, as far as this is practicable, select them from those who have served in the regular army; in default of this, it will select them from among those who have not

served, or from among the other classes. The places not filled up by the nobility will be at the disposal of the commander of the government.

7. Immediately after the publication of these regulations, the civil governors will draw up lists of all the inhabitants of the government, including persons of every class, and will, in conformity with their instructions, send exact copies of these lists to the commander-in-chief of the general district, as well as to the commandants of the militia of such government.

## II. OF THE RAISING, ARMING, AND PROVISIONING THE MILITIA.

8. The civil governors and the marshals of the nobility will fix, according to the above-mentioned lists, and the number of inhabitants of each government, the number of men to be raised, both from the middle classes and from the crown peasants, and inform private individuals what number they are required to furnish towards the contingent of each government.

9. The assemblies of the nobility, as soon as the marshals shall have demanded the number of men to be provisionally armed for the service of their fatherland, will arrange, by an exact and proportional distribution, the contingent which each separate noble must furnish. When this distribution has been made, every proprietor of peasants

will furnish, in the space of a fortnight, the number of men of his contingent: he will give them arms, and, to as great an extent as he can, fire-arms, choosing in preference persons accustomed to handle them, such as huntsmen, sharpshooters, etc. He will clothe them in a manner suited to the season, and give them three roubles, in ready-money, and provisions for three months.

10. The commonalties and villages belonging to the crown will also furnish, in the same space of time, their respective contingents; they will choose those persons who are most capable of bearing arms, with which they will have to supply them, as well as with provisions, clothing, and money, as in the preceding article.

11. After the publication of these regulations, and the receipt of the lists of the number of men to be raised in each government, the corporations of the cities will fix, without delay and with due consideration of the means and zeal of the inhabitants, the amount each citizen must contribute, either in money, provisions, or other articles, for the equipment and arming of the militia. The list of these patriotic offers will be forwarded to the civil governor, to the commandants of the militia of the government, and to the commander-in-chief, who will without delay forward them to us for our information.

12. The assemblies of the nobility and the corporations of the cities, respectively, will appoint trustworthy and intelligent persons, who will be charged with the safe-keeping

of these offerings, and the commanders-in-chief, as well as commandants of the governments, will select spots for the establishment of depôts.

13. Free persons of all classes, who, animated by a desire to serve their country, shall wish voluntarily to take up arms and participate in the temporary armaments, shall be received by the commandants of governments.

14. All the inhabitants of the governments possessing in their houses guns, swords, sabres, pikes, and other arms, of whatever description they may be, exclusive of those which they require for the arming of the militia and themselves, are invited to send them for the service of their country—in the districts, to the marshals and commandants of the districts, and, in the cities, to the town-hall or to the prefect of police. Such offerings, for which a receipt will be given, and which will be reported to the commandant of the government, will be received with gratitude.

15. Whatever powder, cannons, bullets and other munitions of war, are wanting in the various governments, will be delivered from the arsenals of the empire and the magazines of the Crown. The commanders-in-chief, and those of the governments, will take care, as far as possible, to provide themselves with all that they may want, and the local magistrates will lend them every assistance in carrying out our wishes.

16. To reinforce and exercise the militia, a sufficient

number of troops of the line will be detached and placed under the orders of the commandants of the government.

### III. OF THE INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE MILITIA.

17. The commander-in-chief of each general district, will see that all the measures relative to the common defence are executed, agreeably to the instructions which will be forwarded to him. His orders will be carried out with the same promptitude and precision as if they emanated from the supreme power. The commander will present us those who distinguish themselves by their zeal, in order that we may grant them the advancement and other rewards which they shall have merited.

18. In all that relates to the companies of the government (the gendarmerie) the commandants of the governments, as well as the civil governors, are under the orders of the chief of the general district.

19. The marshals of the governments and of the districts, will contribute, to the utmost of their power, to the success of the measures adopted by the commandant of the militia of the government. They are obliged to execute all his orders, to which the city prefect, the district captains, the magistrates, and the corporations, are also subjected, in all that relates to the common defence. Lastly, the commanders of the bodies of a thousand and of five hundred men of the militia (regiment and battalion), and those of the inferior sections, are likewise subordinate to him.

20. As the measures adopted could never attain their end without the most absolute obedience, and the most severe discipline, it is evident that the slightest instances of disobedience to the orders of the chiefs would become hurtful to the public good, if they were not suppressed with the utmost rigour of the law. Therefore, to prevent the evil which might result, and which would be detrimental to the happiness of the empire, full power is given and conferred, by these presents, on the chiefs of general districts, to arrest and bring before courts-martial all those who may be guilty of disobedience towards their chiefs, and violate the faithful observance of the oaths, of which a particular form for the use of the militia will be issued.

All the sentences of the military tribunals, even those that condemn the guilty person to death, will be executed without the slightest delay.

When the Almighty shall have blessed our efforts, and those of our faithful subjects; when the arms taken up for the defence of our fatherland, and for the purpose of lowering the insolence of the enemy, shall have obtained for us the desired success; when the stranger that menaces us shall no longer exist,—then these troops, after having offered up thanksgivings to that most Holy Providence which will have guided their arms, will lay down their weapons, and return to the hearths which their courage will have preserved for them; it is then that, in the bosom of his own family, every one will enjoy the sweets of the peace, to which he will so gloriously have contributed.

We promise solemnly, on our Imperial word of honour,

and we impose upon ourselves the sacred duty of bestowing, in the name of a grateful country, all kinds of favours and recompenses on its worthy children, and of rewarding, by honours and marks of distinction, all those who, under the existing circumstances, shall signalise themselves by their valour, the sacrifice of their personal interests to the public good, and by any other services which they may render to their country.

A grateful posterity will bless the names of its defenders, and their glory will pass from generation to generation.

Given at St, Petersburg, the 30th November, in the year of grace 1806, and of our reign the 6th.

The original is signed with his Imperial Majesty's own hand, and countersigned by the Minister of the Interior, Count Kotschoubey.

C.

These two regiments, unique in Europe, are each composed of two or three couples of men, chosen as specimens from all the regiments of the army, and from the squadrons of the Circassians, Caucasians, Georgians, Mingrelians, Cossacks, and other races subject to Russia. Nothing can be more sad or strange than to see these two corps defile, especially the cavalry, on account of the decided and gaudy colours of its uniforms.

Both of these corps resemble two regiments composed, after the loss of a sanguinary battle, of all the fugitives of an army.

To render the contrast more striking and more unsupportable, the men march pell-mell without any order. Thus, a Cossack, with his long lance and small, thin horse, is the companion of a burly Cuirassier, mounted on a colossal steed; a Hussar rides by the side of an Artilleryman; a large Dragoon, by that of a Georgian, in his white and gold tunic; a Circassian, with his coat of mail and his casque, like a lightning conductor, mounted upon a little horse of the Steppes, which is always untamed and untameable, trots along, near a Grenadier, proportioned like a giant; while the mournful Sapper, with his pavement-coloured coat, marches with the sombre Caucasian, in his black skirt, bordered with red lace.

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HENRY VIZETELLY, PRINTER AND ENGRAVER, GOUGH SQUARE, FLEET STREET.

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